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THE BROSS LECTURES . . 1923

Title

(THE) BIBLICAL IDEA OF GOD:

LECTURES DELIVERED BEFORE
LAKE FOREST COLLEGE
ON THE FOUNDATION OF THE LATE
WILLIAM BROSS

BY

REV. M. BROSS THOMAS, A.M., D.D.

PROFESSOR EMERITUS OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE
OF LAKE FOREST COLLEGE

God
Title

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
NEW YORK 1924

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FOREWORD

In writing these lectures I have had an audience in mind rather than readers. This accounts for somewhat of repetition and also for a certain directness of address. I have also had in view those whom Mr. Lincoln called "the plain people," that large number of Christian men and women who are interested in the great truths of the Bible but are not familiar with the works of those scholars who deal largely and minutely with its history, structure, composition, authorship, and those details which are found in books of Introduction. If the author can be of any help to those who seek for guidance and confirmation of faith in the midst of the controversies of the present day, which too much tend to weaken, if not destroy, belief in the Bible's divine origin and in its teaching concerning the nature, character, and eternal purpose of the God of Revelation, he will consider his work not to have been in vain.

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THE BIBLICAL IDEA OF GOD

I

THE BIBLICAL IDEA OF GOD

CONCRETE IN PRESENTATION, PERSONAL, MONOTHEISTIC, SPIRITUAL. ORDER IN TIME OF THE BOOKS

THE first sentence of Calvin's "Institutes of the Christian Religion" is as follows: "True and substantial wisdom principally consists of two parts, the knowledge of God and the knowledge of ourselves." He then proceeds to show the intimate relation and interdependence of these two kinds of knowledge. Both are necessary for man's highest welfare. But since God is the greatest object of knowledge, to know him is relatively more important than to know ourselves. The Greeks, by their adage, "Know thyself," seem to have placed the greater emphasis upon the latter; but the Bible places it upon the former. Our Lord, in his prayer at the close of the last supper, said: "This is life eternal, that they should know Thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou didst send" (John 17 : 3). Paul, in his letter to the Ephesians, wrote that he did not cease to pray, that "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him" (Eph. 1 : 17); and to the Philippians that their "love

may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all discernment" (Phil. 1:9), and also to the Colossians, that they "may be filled with the knowledge of his [that is, God's] will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding . . . and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Col. 1:9, 10). Indeed, it is not possible here and now to quote the passages in which emphasis is placed upon such knowledge. If you look up these words, *knowledge* and *to know*, where God is the object, you may be surprised to find how often they are used. They appear with striking frequency in the Old Testament, they occur again and again in the New Testament, either explicitly stated or implied. Hence it is not true, as is sometimes said, that religion, at least the religion of the Bible, consists merely or mainly of emotion. That the emotional nature, in its deepest and noblest elements, is involved is true, but it is also true that it is knowledge, the knowledge of God, that awakens and determines the character of the emotions, and gives and sustains their life and austere beauty. Agnosticism, so prevalent in our day, the hopeless conclusion of so many philosophic minds striving to solve the challenging mystery of the universe, asserts the unknowableness of God. It neither affirms nor denies his existence. It simply says: "I do not, I cannot know." It is, as President Mark Hopkins used to say, "The know-nothing philosophy." But the Bible says that God is and can be known, and that "he is a rewarder of them that seek after him" (Heb. 11:6). It makes no elaborate argument to prove his existence. Its opening

words imply that as the instinctive belief of man. For man, as Aristotle defined him, is a "rational animal." Being rational, he is therefore essentially religious. To worship is the universal and compelling impulse of his nature; and worship implies the conviction of an object worthy of that worship.

But believing in a being or beings greater than himself, to whom he has everywhere built altars and offered prayers and sacrifices, man has yet clothed that being or those beings with attributes suggested by his own evil nature or with conceptions formed from the philosophic contemplation of the world around him and his own rational nature. The Iliad, which has been called the Bible of the Greeks, ascribed to Zeus and the family of the gods the vices of human society, so that Plato would banish the Iliad from his ideal republic. But Greek philosophy wrought out a conception of the divine nature and character which, while less merely human than that of the Iliad, was yet ineffective to touch man's heart and transform his life, and was the object of contemplation and discussion only, and was confined to the intellectual few. The common people still worshipped their human gods.

Yet however inadequate or false such conceptions are, man by his very nature seems compelled to form them. Human thought in its ultimate aim is really a quest after God. It seeks for a unity in the endless variety of the world and for a fundamental truth which shall explain all things. The speculative thought of the physical scientists is not satisfied to rest with the many

and varied forces and forms with which they deal but affirms an infinite and eternal energy of which all forces and forms are but the ever-changing manifestation. Ascribe personality and moral character to this infinite and eternal energy and we may rightly name it God.

That God is is one question. What he is is another. The Bible assumes the first and answers the second. Its answer, moreover, claims to be a direct revelation of God himself; a revelation not in the works of nature, in the starlit heavens above, nor in the earth with its manifold forms of life beneath, although the Bible teaches that these declare him; nor in the mind and conscience of man, intuitive of universal and necessary truths, and imposing an imperative moral law; although Paul at Athens built an argument on these; but in a spoken and written word given to man and through man, and because divinely given is therefore authoritative and complete.

This is the plain statement of the opening words of the epistle to the Hebrews: "God having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in a Son." And then the author goes on to characterize the Son as having been "appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the worlds; who being the effulgence of his glory, and the very image of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his [the Son's] power, when he [the Son] had made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; having become

by so much better than the angels, as he hath inherited a more excellent name than they" (Heb. 1 : 1–4).

In this introduction, remarkable both for the truths it teaches and for their eloquent expression, the author states in explicit terms one essential and fundamental fact. It is that God has spoken. This underlies and runs through the entire sentence, which consists also of a series of striking contrasts. In the past God spoke unto the fathers. In the present he has spoken unto us. Then he spoke "by divers portions and in divers manners." Now he has spoken in a way that is full and final and complete. Then he spoke in many men, the prophets. Now he has spoken in one, a Son.

Thus the author (whoever he was, no one knows) reduces the many books which compose the Bible to an essential unity. To him both Old Testament and New are the word of God. The many and varied voices which sound through the long ages of Israel's past have one elemental tone essentially divine; and this rises at last to full volume in the voice of Jesus Christ, who is both human and divine.

This position taken at the outset by the author of Hebrews is that of these lectures. It has been held through long centuries and tested and confirmed by the experiences of many generations of believing men. It is the Bible's estimate of itself. The prophets announced it. The Lord Jesus and his apostles affirmed it. The Jewish and the Christian churches have always and everywhere accepted it, the one as regards the Old Testament, the other as regards both. It is

the unshaken foundation of their religious faith. But in these days, as also in earlier, it meets with limitation, or with denial and rejection. The religion of the Bible, many claim, is but one among the religions of the world, a merely natural human product. It has no higher source, no more divine authority. Its laws are merely fixed human customs; its prophecy and poetry the expression of merely human experience, of human desires and hopes and aspirations. Nay, more; it is said to have been at last found out by scholars, whose researches, it is claimed, have been made in a thoroughgoing scientific spirit and with a rigorous scientific method, that much of the history recorded in the Scriptures, both old and new, is not a statement of fact but is largely fiction, the work of authors who either read their own present into the past, or filled the dim and distant past with unreal persons and fancied events. And the serious aspect of this denial and rejection is that it no longer stands without the church, but has secured a place within. It is taught in school and college and theological seminaries. It is suggested or plainly stated in periodical and pulpit; and the books that uphold it issue constantly from the press.

I do not question the sincerity of those who hold and promulgate this view. I suggest no doubt of their Christian character and life. It is not with men but with opinions that we have to deal. And it is clear that these two views concerning the religion of the Bible are radically different and opposed. There is no neutral ground. If one is true the other is false.

However, into this question I do not propose now to enter. The books which seek to determine it are many and accessible. The literary and historical criticism of the Bible now constitutes a library by itself. The first book for which a prize was given on this foundation, "The Problem of the Old Testament," by Professor Orr, as also the second book, "The Mythical Interpretation of the Gospels," by Doctor Thomas James Thorburn, are most important parts of this library and are conservative in their position. In support of this position archæology is bringing many assured results obtained by recent investigation, and the scholars who uphold it are neither few nor lacking in learning and force of thought.

Aside, moreover, from all other considerations it would be strange indeed if this age-long faith in the Bible were proven false. For the issue is vital. On that faith the Jewish and Christian churches were founded and by it they have lived. Destroy that faith and as distinctive organizations they will fall, if not at once, yet ultimately into a ruin final and complete. For if God has not spoken in prophet, in apostle, and in a Son, then certainly the Christian church has no distinctive message and no reason separately to exist. If in any way it should continue, it will become merely an ethical society without power to lift men to higher altitudes of character and thus secure its aims. But that God has spoken we may not doubt the church will continue to believe, despite the assaults of men, however scholarly in attainments, however persistent in at-

tack. And it may be that a result of the investigation we are to make, however imperfectly and inadequately we may make it, will help to the confirmation of that belief. For if the Biblical teaching concerning God is found to be noble in its character, consistent and progressive in its unfolding, and meeting and satisfying the conditions and deepest needs of the human heart, then this is an argument for its truth which cannot be ignored nor lightly set aside.

There are four general and essential points of view which at the outset should be distinctly stated. The first is that the Biblical idea of God is not abstract and speculative, but purely and wholly concrete. By this I mean that it is presented not merely as a subjective conception, but in objective form and as corresponding to an objective reality. In this respect it differs radically from the idea of philosophy. Philosophers deal but little with the actual or concrete world. I do not deny that they are searchers after truth, but theirs is a quest ultimately for *being*, the most highly abstract of all ideas. They deal with the purely rational conceptions of the mind, and in a highly rarefied atmosphere build airy structures, whose materials, however logically related and finished in form, are not taken from the actual, every-day experiences of human life. The philosopher lives in his study among his books, or in his classroom, far from the actual world where men sin and suffer, toil and strive, hope and despair, aspire and fail; where appetite and passion and frenzied action constitute largely the experiences of mankind. His is

the strictly intellectual world, the world of pure thought, undisturbed by the ceaseless and agonizing conflicts which go on just beyond the walls that shut him in.

Thus philosophy dwells among abstractions and is, as it has been defined since Socrates, a *search* after truth which, like the radiant rainbow arch, is ever fleeing from its grasp. The search is not without its compensations. The philosopher has done important work in the exploration of the abstract or ideal world. For such a world exists, and the desire to explore it is ever inciting the noblest minds, and the power to do so is among the greatest gifts of man. Philosophy, it has been said, bakes no bread. It contributes nothing to satisfy the lower needs of man; but it deepens and expands his reasoning powers and acquaints him with realities of which the sordid soul engaged altogether in ministering to animal wants does not dream. Yet, though it may teach important truths, the forms in which they are presented are beyond the reach of the ordinary eye, and the language in which they are uttered is strange to the ordinary ear. On the contrary, the Biblical idea of God, while containing all the truth the philosopher has found, and indeed much more, is expressed in forms and in a language with which the ordinary man is familiarly acquainted. "The heavens," the psalmist says, "declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge" (Psalms 19:1, 2). The same

truth is stated in much the same way by the Apostle Paul to the people and priests of Lystra, when they would worship him and Barnabas, bidding them turn from their idols "unto a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that in them is . . . and who left not himself without witness, in that he did good and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness" (Acts 14:15, 17).

In historic events also is the Biblical idea of God disclosed—in the account of the creation and of the moral fall of man, in the migrations of peoples, in the experiences of persons, such as the call of Abraham, the mission and work of Moses, the deliverance from Egypt, the giving of the law, the conquest of the promised land, the reigns of judges and of kings, the sending and work of the long line of prophetic men culminating in the coming and teaching and character and death and resurrection of the divine Son. All this is not a series of abstract statements but of actual, historic, concrete events and persons; and it is the only way in which for mankind the true idea of God could be adequately and effectively disclosed.

The second general point of view is that the Biblical idea of God is purely personal. Made known in persons and in the experiences of persons, it could not well be other than personal. In this it again differs from what much of philosophy has taught.

But, that we may have a clear conception of the term we are using, let us ask what is meant by a person.

It is a conception we all possess and act upon, but how few ever stop precisely to define it. It is like vision. We see and know that we see, but what it is to see—the physical apparatus and the mental processes involved—not many pause to consider. Yet the essential elements of personality are not far to seek nor difficult to find. They are, as usually stated, self-consciousness and self-determination. Every one is immediately conscious of thinking, of feeling, and of willing; and this consciousness is individual and distinctive. Moreover, it is an inward state of certainty. If man is not certain of these realities he is certain of nothing. He is also conscious, not merely that there are thoughts, emotions, choices, but that they are *his* thoughts, *his* emotions, *his* choices, and not those of another. In this way he affirms himself as a separate and distinct entity. Hence in the unity of these three elemental modes of personal being he stands face to face with himself and has reached a sure basis and starting-point for all subsequent conclusions. When Descartes said, "Cogito ergo sum" (I think therefore I am), he stated a fact of which there could be no possible doubt. In the process of investigation he had put aside all other beliefs as doubtful, but here at last he reached the bed-rock of certainty.

But philosophers have raised the question, what is the self?—as if it were something different from these elemental and essential modes of its expression, as if the self were behind them and beyond conscious reach. But thought, emotion, volition do not mask but mani-

fest the self. It is in the unity of these in consciousness that the self is known.

The other attribute of personality, self-determination, is a centre of long and intense controversy. That there are volitions or choices no one does or can deny. But that they are free, that is, self-determined, is denied. The question is of profound interest to every one. Not only is it debated in the schools but among the unlearned as well. Milton, in "Paradise Lost," makes some of the fallen spirits sit apart and reason high——

> "Of Providence, Foreknowledge, will and fate —
> Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute;
> And found no end, in wandering mazes lost."
> (Book 2, lines 559–561.)

But no reasoning process can decide this question. Its decision can be rendered only by the direct deliverance of consciousness. The freedom of the will is an ultimate fact. Consciousness testifies to every one that his choices are determined by himself. It knows nothing of a higher power determining them. Even Herbert Spencer acknowledges that the consciousness of freedom is, to use his language, "an inexpugnable datum" of the human mind, that is, a state or affirmation of consciousness of which man cannot rid himself, although Spencer immediately proceeds to argue against its validity. This the exigencies of his philosophical system demanded. But the languages of the world and the structures of all human society are the expres-

sion of the universal and ultimate consciousness of the freedom of the will. To deny this is to affirm that man's nature is at its heart a lie.

To these attributes of self-consciousness and self-determination which are essential to personality there needs to be added a moral element. Animals are not persons, however self-conscious and self-determined they may be. They are *un*moral. They give no evidence of moral ideals or sense of moral obligation. But man does, and without these he would not be a person. That which presents these ideals is the conscience, a term formed of two Latin words, *con* and *scio*, which together mean, *I know with*. This is also the meaning of the Greek term for conscience, *συνείδησις*, a knowledge with. But what is it that I know? Is it not myself? And with what do I know myself? Is it not with, or in connection with, a law? But whose law? Not my law, self-imposed, for I find myself in conflict with it. Nor a law which other men have laid upon me. Human customs may indeed harden into law. But conscience, in its deepest and widest affirmations, deep as the inmost heart of man, and wide as his social world, recognizes a law whose source is beyond the self, and whose authority is far more imperative than mankind's collective will.

Conscience, with its universal and ever-insistent claims, is the bed-rock on which rest all true ideas of both man and God. On it all false conceptions are inevitably wrecked. It is, as we shall see, elemental in

the Biblical idea of the character of God, and pervades the entire Scriptures, both old and new.

God, then, is personal in his nature, according to the Bible, a being self-conscious, self-determined and moral, not under law, as man is, nor superior to law, but a law unto himself, the ultimate source of all law and all authority, responsible unto none, but laying upon every man the imperative obligation of obedience to his supreme will.

Not thus, however, do the philosophers of this world always teach. The religions of the world, even that of the most degraded peoples, present a god or gods personal in nature, and in some degree, however slight and elusive, both spiritual and moral, with other attributes essential to deity, which lift their conceptions sometimes to a lofty plane. Thus the Indians of Guiana speak of the "Ancient One, the Ancient One in Sky-land, Our Maker, Our Father, Our Great Father" (Lang, "The Making of Religion," page 222). But philosophy, brooding over the deep mysteries of being, and using only the intellect for their solution, has ever tended toward the *im*personal in its conception of the ultimate and universal reality. This is the teaching of Pantheism and Materialism, whose characteristic note is *im*personality. Man is the only personal being, and as such is but a passing and momentary wave upon the sea of infinite and universal existence. He rises for one brief instant into distinct and conscious individuality and then sinks absolutely and forever into unconsciousness and bare oneness with the All.

Such a conclusion of the mere intellect may be logically deduced from the premises employed, but it is against the deepest instincts, the strongest yearnings, and the imperative affirmations of the human soul. The philosophic minds of India, of Greece, and of some in these modern days have taught it, but the religions of all have rejected it; and religion, which is a universal fact, has as much right to be heard as has philosophy.

It is from his own conscious personality that man rises to his belief in the personality of God. These two beliefs stand or fall together. This is clearly evident from the history of philosophic thought in India. Resting on fundamental convictions of the human soul, they stand when these convictions are clearly recognized. They fall when these convictions are obscured or dissolved by speculations which forsake the realm of fact and wander in an unreal world of abstract dialectics.

A third general point is the unity of God. The Bible teaches that there is one God and only one. Its religion is strictly monotheistic. In this respect it is radically different from the religions of the world. Polytheism, the worship of many gods, has apparently within historic times, been universal outside the Hebrew race. Whether there was in the earliest day, when man first began to worship, a simple undeveloped monotheism, is a question upon which scholars are divided in opinion. Indications furnished by investigations of the historic and primitive periods show that man has always and everywhere been a worshipper,

but whether of one or many gods the proofs thus obtained are too slight and shadowy to lead to a positive conclusion. Such investigations, however, take no account of the Bible. Its descriptions of human origins is ignored as merely mythical. Yet whether mythical or not, whether in any and what sense true or not, I do not here stop to consider. These questions, however important, are beside our quest. This, as I have said, is simply to find out what the Bible teaches concerning God; and there can be no doubt that from its earliest chapters it is clearly and positively monotheistic. It records, however, and condemns the prevalent polytheism. All throughout Hebrew history, until after the captivity, there is a conflict between those who taught the sole deity of Jehovah and the common people, who were continually falling away from that belief. They were unable to resist the degrading influence of the nations, great and small, with which they came in contact. These multiplied their deities, and in Babylonia and Egypt worshipped them in magnificent temples and with elaborate and imposing forms. In Canaan, as the sacred record tells us, the Israelites again and again "forsook Jehovah, the God of their fathers, who brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods" (Judges 2:12). Even the temple built for the sole worship of Jehovah was polluted by the infamous and debasing rites of alien peoples. To purify the Hebrew nation from idolatrous polytheism and to establish finally and forever the belief in one sole and supreme God was throughout long

centuries the work not only of divinely commissioned prophets, but also of the bitter experiences which inevitably followed their apostasies, culminating at last in the Babylonian captivity.

The fourth general point is that the Biblical idea of God is spiritual. This is involved in the conception of him as moral or personal. But it may be asked, what is a spirit? Etymologically in both Greek and Latin, it means *breath* or *to breathe*. But these are physical terms used as figures of speech to express something like and yet different, in regard to which the thought of most men is far from being definite and clear. It is of something invisible, intangible, widely diffused, a sort of substance indescribable in positive terms. The definitions are usually negative. In the early days of my active ministry I remember seeking for a clear and positive definition of what is meant by spirit. The statement in theological and other books was that a spirit is an *im*material substance. But that tells me what spirit is *not*. It does not tell me what spirit *is*. All that is affirmed is that a spirit is *not matter*. This doubtless comes from the common conviction that the material world is the *real* world. But is it, to use a little girl's expression, the "really real" world? The question has occasioned endless debate and over it great systems of philosophy are divided. No doubt the world of matter has reality of a certain kind. We can touch, handle, weigh, and measure it. It impresses all the senses. It is the earliest reality with which we are familiar, and from the beginning invites our

interest and awakens our energies. But later on in life, when our reflective powers are developed, we become acquainted with that other and higher world, the inner one of mind or spirit. You cannot touch or handle, weigh or measure that. It is known not mediately through bodily impressions but immediately in the consciousness of self. Here, then, if anywhere, is, as has been already said, fundamental reality. For to us the reality of what we call matter depends upon the reality of mind. Mind or spirit is the primal fact. It is not a function of the brain, a mysterious movement of highly organized nerve-matter. It transcends this and, as Divine Spirit, is the underlying cause of all forms of physical organization, from the minutest grain of dust to the vastest and remotest system which moves and shines in splendor upon the confines of the world. Indeed, all these, when analyzed in the laboratory of thought, are found to be suffused with mind. All law, all order are but the expression of mind. In its ultimate form the universe, as the profoundest philosophy has always taught, is a "spiritual system." If this be true, then he who formed it and whose presence it reveals, must be spiritual in nature. This throughout is the teaching of the Bible. All religions also have held, however dimly and imperfectly, this view. The African savage worshipping his fetich, worships not the low material object, but the supposed indwelling spirit. And the Greeks, who built splendid altars before the shrine of Zeus, and carved with highest art the marble images of their gods, bowed not to

the outer and visible forms, however noble in design and beautiful in execution, but to the personal, that is the spiritual, beings whom they represented.

We have now stated certain general and essential elements in the teaching of the Bible concerning God. They are not all that we shall find, nor are they the most important and distinctive. With the exception of its strict and lofty monotheism, they do not, as we have seen, belong exclusively to the Bible. But they are throughout presented by it in a far more impressive and effective way than in any philosophy or religion that the world has known. In the Old Testament period the religion had its outward expression. There was a temple and altars and sacrifices and an elaborate ritual. But the emphasis was not even then on these. In the most sacred place, the Holy of Holies, no image of the unseen deity was found, as in other temples, but rather a moral and religious law, expressing the divine will and nature, and addressed to the heart and conscience of mankind, lifting the adoring spirit above the objects and splendors of the material world.

Let me remind you once more that at present I raise no objection, nor attempt any answer concerning the authorship of the various books of the Bible, nor when they were written, nor whether any of them are essentially historical, or altogether or in part fiction. Such questions may be referred to as we proceed; but however it may have come to be, and however we may regard it, the Bible is a fact, just as the works of Plato are a fact, and as such we should investigate it, with-

out those presuppositions which antecedently determine our conclusion. If the conclusion lies already in the premises, investigation is useless and a waste of time. But this plain and simple truth is not always recognized. Thus the Bible clearly claims to be a self-revelation of God. But by many at the outset, without testing this claim by investigation, it is assumed that the claim is false. Thus Kuenen, in his "Religion of Israel," in the first chapter, claims that this religion is a purely natural, human product, one merely of the religions of the world, "nothing less, but also nothing more." The Bible, however, as a fact, must declare its own nature. By this I do not mean merely the claims in words of its human authors, although these should not be ignored, and in connection with other things may be of weight and value. But just as some noble cathedral, with lofty roof and pillared aisle, tells its own story, that it was built by some devout and greatly gifted mind for religious uses, so the Bible should be allowed to tell its story by its structure, by its character, by its teaching concerning man and God, and by its power to lift the soul of man to the highest realms of righteousness, of joy, and of peace.

We find the books of the Bible arranged in a certain order. This order is not always that of their composition. In the New Testament the greater number of Paul's epistles were written before the gospels were composed. This is also true of some or most of the books of the Old Testament. The grouping has been determined by the nature of their contents. The his-

torical books precede the Psalms and the prophets; and in these the order of composition has not been observed. There are early and late Psalms. Isaiah, although his prophecy is placed first in the series, was preceded by Amos and Hosea. Jeremiah, who is placed next to Isaiah, did not prophesy until the closing years and downfall of the southern kingdom. All this is, of course, familiar to scholars, but seems to be unknown to the majority of Bible readers, or at least disregarded in considering its teaching.

In a broad and general way, however, the time order is observed in the arrangement of the books. The Old Testament begins with the creation and ends with the postexilic prophets; just as the New Testament begins with the life of Christ and ends with the Apocalypse, which, however you may interpret it, implies the founding and spread of the church, and at the same time has a forward look into the church's future.

We shall conduct our investigation, therefore, in accordance with the order of persons and events as the Bible itself presents or, rather, indicates them, for it is from the Bible itself we learn that the order within the main groups is not the order of time. Thus we will study, in the first place, the Biblical idea of God as presented in the primitive and patriarchal periods. Genesis, or the book of origins, gives us in the first eleven chapters the account of the primitive period. Then follow the times of the patriarchs, the call and wanderings of Abraham, the lives of Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. Then came about four hundred years of silence, broken

by the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, which contain an account of the bitter Egyptian bondage, and of the birth and leadership and legislation of Moses. To these we should add the book of Joshua, which completes the account of the entire period from the leaving Egypt to the conquest and settlement of the promised land. Then we will consider the conception of God found in the book of Judges, which tells the story of the years between the death of Joshua and the work of Samuel, the last of that notable series of divinely commissioned rulers of Israel, who kept alive the national and patriotic spirit, and again and again rescued the people from an oppression brought upon them because they forsook the worship of Jehovah and followed other gods. This period, though much longer in time, is in some respects like those few years which have been called the critical period of American history. With a unity constituted only by race, by language, and by religion, the people come by their experiences to feel the need of a more visible and tangible unity centring in the person of a king. Hence their demand for a monarchy which, although at first opposed, was yielded to by Samuel.

This change of government brings us to the times of the psalmists and prophets, during which there was an impressive and rich development of the idea of God, nobly expressed in the personal experiences of Israel's religious poets and in the messages of warning and condemnation, and also of consolation and hope, of her inspired seers. It was doubtless late in this period,

perhaps some time after the downfall of the northern kingdom, that the book of Job was written, the greatest book in the literature of the Old Testament, and some would claim in the literature of the world. Then come the exilic and postexilic prophets, and after these perhaps the book of Ecclesiastes, which records the experiences of one who sought a satisfactory end in life and found none except in the fear of God and the keeping of his commandments, "for this is the whole duty of man" (Eccles. 12:13). Then follows a period of which no canonical book gives an account, but which is made known to some extent by the Apocrypha.

We turn then to the New Testament, to the teaching of our Lord and his apostles, in which the Scriptural conception of God reaches its complete development and expression. Beyond this nothing has been or can be added. Whatever statements the church has made have only been attempts to formulate and emphasize the facts and truths of Scripture. If the great historic creeds contain additions or modifications or merely philosophic explanations of the Biblical facts and truths, they are not to be accepted as authoritative, constraining belief, but as merely human documents. Neither pope nor cardinals, neither synods nor assemblies have the right to impose their thought and will upon the faith of the Christian church. The Bible, which is addressed to the common understanding and is a self-interpretative book, is the sole and supreme authority. If this were the accepted rule, the unhappy divisions and antagonisms which characterize Chris-

tianity to-day would never have existed. The unity of the church would have remained unbroken, centring in a common faith in a common Lord.

We have thus before us a long course of historic development, the germs of which lie in a far-distant past, a course full of remarkable events and great personalities, whose character and influence have determined the direction which the progressive religious life of man has taken. The central and determining idea of this historic development has been the conception of God revealed in the Bible. All religions, indeed, are constituted, are differentiated and distinguished, by the idea of the divine nature and character. So, also, are all philosophies and theologies and creeds. From the lowest fetichism up to the thought of Plato and the teaching of our Lord this idea is central and elemental. Always and everywhere man has been haunted and constrained in action and belief by the thought of God. He cannot escape it. His rational and moral nature compels him to form some conception, however remote from or near the essential truth. He has not reasoned himself into it. It is, in its last analysis, an intuition, an elemental consciousness of another self, standing over against his own finite self, who is to be propitiated, worshipped, obeyed. Therefore atheists are few, and are the results of perverted reasoning, obscuring this deeper conviction native to the soul. Wherever the thought of God which is found in the Bible is made clearly known, and in the concrete forms the Bible uses, there the forces of unbelief give way.

We live in times of minute and highly developed scholarship. Nature, man, the Bible are subjected to microscopic and extended investigation. There are intense conflicts, as there ever have been, and many theories once held as truths are being flung upon the scrap-heap. As regards the Bible, the sphere and aims of investigation are materially changed. Much of the scholarship is critical, not constructive. It looks upon the Bible largely, if not exclusively, as merely the literature of the Hebrew people. It is not so much the *contents* as the form and structure, the sources and putting together of the various books, that are being investigated. Once it was what the Bible taught concerning God and man, their nature and relation to each other, and the duty and destiny of man that was sought for in its pages, and out of this teaching the great ecumenical creeds were formed. But now the questions are: Who wrote Genesis, and when and how was it written? Who wrote Isaiah? How many Isaiahs were there? How many strands have been wrought into the Bible narratives, and what are their distinctive characteristics, and from what part of the Hebrew people did they come? How many redactors, or editors, have there been, and how much did these add or take away? How much is fact, and how much is fiction, and how can fact and fiction be distinguished and untwined from this many-colored and twisted and even tangled thread of narrative? I do not deny that such questions are interesting and indeed important, in so far as they affect our belief in the truthfulness of

the records of the Bible and of its claim to be a revelation of the living God. But relatively they are superficial, in so far as they do not concern the solid and essential contents of this great book. Let scholars decide them as they may, I am confident that no decision will or can destroy the faith of the Christian church in the essential truth of the Bible and in its divine origin and inspiration. This faith has endured the trying test of centuries and the assaults of much scholarly unbelief; and, although not a few may fear that at last *modern* scholarship has given it a mortal blow, let us be assured that the scholars who defend it are as numerous and as well equipped and thoroughgoing as those who would destroy it.

Yet such devout and conservative scholars seem not so well known to the general public as are those whose work is destructive. For to destroy is ever more attractive than to build up. War, with its wide-spread desolations, its fearful passions, its awful waste of human life, its agonies and woe, awakens an intenser interest than the silent forces of peace which create our nobler civilizations and make nations really great. The time will come, however, predicted long centuries ago by Isaiah, Israel's greatest prophet—nay, we can already see the faintly gleaming light of its gracious dawn—when all constructive agencies will have a deeper interest, a more effective power, and it is to the Bible that we shall owe this profound change in the minds of men. Especially shall we owe it to that manifestation of the divine character which is found in

the Bible alone and which reached its culmination in Him at whose birth the angelic choirs sang:

> "Glory to God in the highest,
> And on earth peace among men
> in whom he is well pleased."
> (Luke 2: 14.)

Hence, the present-day destructive criticism of the Bible, although so prevalent, so subtle, so apparently scientific in method, so microscopic in investigation, so learned, so imposing in the authority of great names, so attractive, so seemingly successful in securing its results, so often arrogant in its claims, is destined, in so far as it rests on grounds subversive of Christian faith, to pass into that oblivion where lie already so many vaunted views, which were in conflict not merely with the Bible, but with man's essentially religious nature and his deepest moral needs.

But not only are questions of authorship, and date, and intermingled narrative of fact and fiction, and the various sources from which these came those that today Biblical criticism mainly considers, but there is a distinctive spirit with which it carries on its investigations that we should not fail to notice. While not true of all, it is true of far too many that the Bible is approached and treated with that cold and merely intellectual interest with which the physician dissects a *corpus vile*. But when the knife has done its work and instead of a symmetrical form there remain only separate masses of related fragments, these neither consti-

tute nor explain man. For man is "a living soul," and it is not in the laboratory, with its merely analytic spirit and quest, that you shall find him, but rather in the shop, in the mart, in the thronged street; out in the broad fields beneath the bending skies; in national organizations; in society and in the home; in his literatures and arts; in all forms that express his thought and aspiration, his faith and hope, his sorrow and his joy, his religious beliefs and his moral codes. Here and not elsewhere you shall find man, and here he can be known only with that spirit which is not coldly critical but warm with sympathy and love. These profound emotions, out of which high aims are born and which give nobility and color to human life, are the essential conditions which enable us to understand and appreciate the careers of such men as Abraham and David, Moses and Isaiah, John and Paul. Physical science requires the discerning and calculating intellect alone, but the science of man, the science which would attain to a knowledge of his moral and religious nature and of the God whom the Bible reveals, while requiring no less of intellectual power and apprehension, requires much more the deeper perceptions of the heart if we are to reach its essential principles and comprehend its distinctive truths. These principles and truths are neither found in such completeness nor expressed with such transforming power in any other book, and they have their centre and their personal expression in its conception of the living God. In this lies its influence in the lives of countless numbers of individual men and

in the changing character of the historic development of the modern world. The moral maxims of Confucius, the character and philosophic teaching of Gautama Buddha, the claims and religion of Mohammed, have indeed determined the character and controlled the actions of unnumbered millions of our race, but no other book, no other moral code, no other religion has so appealed to and awakened what is noblest in man, has so aroused his distinctive nature and lifted him to such high planes of duty and devotion as has the Bible. For in its essential nature it is not a philosophy nor a law, but a gospel, a glad tidings concerning God, declaring his gracious attitude toward this lost and sinning world and setting forth in historic terms what he himself has done for its redemption.

Thus, when Paul in his epistle to the Romans defines this gospel it is by the word *power*. The gospel is not merely a moral message, a statement of the highest standard of human duty, but, to use his own form of words, it is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Romans 1 : 16). According to this statement, the source of this power is God, its end is salvation, its condition is faith. The form which this divine power takes is a word—the word of God, that is, the Biblical idea of God expressed in spiritual, concrete, personal terms, culminating in one supreme personality, the Lord Jesus Christ, who according to the Apostle John was the Eternal Word, both human and divine, both living and life-giving, whose nature and work the profoundest minds cannot exhaust, and

yet whose love and sympathy the simplest can understand.

If our study shall lead to the clearer unfolding and more comprehensive grasp of this historic Word, if it shall bring to us a broader view of the divine character, and a deeper faith in its self-revelation, it will not be in vain. For what man most needs is to have a clearer understanding and a more abiding conviction of the truth of the Biblical idea of God.

II

THE BIBLICAL IDEA OF GOD

IN THE PRIMITIVE AND PATRIARCHAL PERIODS, AS SET FORTH IN GENESIS

In the first lecture we have dealt with certain general conceptions, viz., that the Biblical idea of God is concrete in its presentation, personal, moral, spiritual, monotheistic, which conceptions are to be considered more at length and confirmed by the detailed investigation which is to follow. We are now to study this idea as it is presented in the book of Genesis. This gives an account of the primitive and patriarchal periods ending with the descent of Jacob and his family into Egypt and the death of Joseph.

The primitive period opens with the account of creation and ends with the genealogical record leading up to the call of Abraham. This account of creation has long been a subject of controversy. Certain natural sciences have been arrayed against it. Astronomy, geology, anthropology, ethnology, it is claimed, tell a different story. Some of these conflicts have either passed away, or only their lingering echoes are still heard. At present the leading controversy seems to be concerning the literary character and historical origin of this account. Who wrote it? When and where and for what purpose was it written? Is it myth, or legend, or a strictly accurate description of how the

heavens and earth, the animals and man came to be? Did Moses write it, or is it an account by some late writer living in Babylonia, and therefore determined and colored by the religious conceptions of that country and age? Are there two accounts of creation, the first ending with the third verse of the second chapter, and indicated and distinguished by the names of God used in each, as well as by other criteria; and do these two accounts agree or disagree? These are the questions raised by the literary and historical criticism of to-day. The opposing views may be characterized in general as the radical and conservative. In their extreme forms the one denies altogether any truth in the creation story, the other accepts it in the most literal sense. But such sharp antagonisms often lose sight of important truths which may be discerned and held without adopting either extreme. That the Bible account of the origin of the world contains such truths cannot well be denied; and it is not with the source and outward form of the narrative that we are here especially concerned, but with its essential contents. What does it teach concerning God? That is the main and most important question, a question too often disregarded in controversies concerning days, and the order of succession of various existences, and the length of time since man appeared upon the earth. As a witty and eloquent minister of the gospel once put it: "The garden of the Lord has often obscured the Lord of the garden."

We take the Bible as we find it, without prejudg-

ment, whether critical or traditional, and in reading the account of creation inquire, first of all, what was evidently the leading aim of its human author? Was it scientific or religious? Was it to describe *how* the world was made or was it to fix attention on the Maker? In other words, was God the principal subject, or was the description of the various and successive steps in the creative process the principal subject? That it was not the latter seems to be clearly evident from the brief and comprehensive statements which make up the account.

The natural sciences deal in precise and definite details. They seek each link in the chain of physical causation. These causes are also effects of antecedent causes, and their quest ends where that of religion begins. For religion seeks and affirms the one infinite, universal, and personal cause of all that has come to be. It concerns itself with God and regards his works not by themselves alone, to be explored and explained by a strictly scientific method and principles, but as disclosing him. Here psalmist and prophet are better teachers than those who work in laboratories built for physical research.

That the account of creation, while religious in character, is not opposed to the observations and just conclusions of the natural sciences, is held by scholars who are familiar with both natural science and the Bible. A purely scientific account anticipating by thousands of years not only the facts disclosed by modern research, but also the form and method in which these are

presented, would have been beyond the comprehension of the men of the age in which the account was written. As it is, however, it fits any age; the simplest minds can grasp its essential truth, and men of great scientific attainments have been impressed by its beauty and power, as of a noble poem, whose theme is the origin of the world. In its main outline it is in agreement with the story science tells. There was first a formless state of matter, "the earth was waste and void"—words which well express the condition of fire-mist out of which the vast systems of sun and star are said to have been evolved. Then in orderly succession came light, and the firmament, or expanse of heaven, the separation of land and water, the appearance of vegetation, of the sun and moon and stars, of fish and fowl, and, last of all, of the higher animals and man. Here, then, is a gradual and progressive development from formless and inanimate matter up to living and rational existence, the bright consummate flower of all.

The only apparent conflict with the conclusions of natural science is the appearance on the fourth day of the sun and moon and stars, which such science teaches preceded the existence of the earth and its inhabitants. But, however we may attempt to resolve this conflict, and such attempts are made, however conclusive or inconclusive they may be, the fact remains that in the large outline there is agreement. But even if in certain portions of the two accounts, the Biblical and the scientific, there is want of harmony, it is a grave mis-

take to rest on this the essential truth of the Biblical account. For the essential truth concerns God, his nature and character, and his relationship to the world. To the natural sciences the main subject is the *creation;* but to the religion of the Bible the main subject is the *Creator.* The emphasis is upon *who* made the world, not upon *how* it was made. This has been too often disregarded by both friend and foe of the Bible. But the word God stands out in the account as if it were written in largest letters of living light. It occurs no less than thirty-five times in the thirty-four verses contained in the account, and each time it is the subject of a verb expressing some particular action. God created, God said, God saw, God divided, God called, God made, God set in the firmament, God blessed, God finished his work and rested: these are the terms used constantly throughout this brief account. They fix attention on him more especially than on his work; and the monotheism, which is clearly evident and denied by none, is in striking and decisive contrast with the prevailing polytheism of the ancient world.

It has been thought by some that the main purpose of the author was to teach and emphasize the monotheistic view. In the opening words of his brief yet sublime statement he says that in the beginning God already is, saying it by implication as if it were undoubted truth, and that all other existences came into being through his creative power. But in the Babylonian mythology the gods are begotten of chaos and dark night. They do not have eternal being. This mono-

theism, even if the account were written as late as the Babylonian captivity, is most remarkable, however you may account for it. That among the babel of many voices uttering praises in many temples to many finite gods there should be heard one clear voice affirming the one infinite and ever-living God, would seem to be alone rightly explained by the self-revelation of that supreme God to which the Bible ascribes it.

Moreover, in considering the narrative of creation, it should be noted that there is no attempt to describe the method by which God works. Such words as *created, made, said* are left unexplained. The process is undefined. We are not told whether creation was instantaneous or prolonged. There must have been an instant when things began, but subsequent to that the account describes six days of work, whether ordinary days of twenty-four hours each is meant by the author, or long periods of time, is a matter of conjecture; and whether there is continuous genetic evolution or a series of distinct creations is a question concerning which even conservative scholars are not agreed. It is a fact, however, that men have read into this account their own meanings, and it is mainly over these that controversies have arisen. Thus, as regards the creation of man it seems to have been assumed (and this apparently has been held to be the orthodox interpretation) that invisible hands fashioned an image from the clay, and that invisible lips breathed into it the breath of life. But this is to form a mental picture which the account does not warrant, a picture taken

from the sculptor's workshop. God's method of working, it may rightly be assumed, is not man's method. If we wish to know what that method is, we should go to God's workshop, wherein he is still at work—in all life and growth, in tree and flower, in beast and bird, in ocean and stream, in sun and star. Hence, while the Bible teaches that he is the originator and maker, the student of nature, whether devout or undevout, whether believer in the Bible or unbeliever, is yet by sincere and patient investigation of the forms and forces of the world, by discovery of past and present facts and of the dominating and guiding laws which these facts disclose, showing us *how* God has worked and still is working in the creation and sustaining of the world and man. Therefore the investigations of the student of the Bible and of the student of nature should not lead to conflicting results. They are on different planes, and hence seek different ends and different answers to their quest. The one teaches *who originated* the world and man, with only large and comprehensive outline of the method; the other endeavors to tell us *how* with precise and minute statement of the various steps in the age-long process.

Seeking thus to clear the field of all unnecessary controversy and holding that truth in one sphere cannot be in conflict with truth in another, let us inquire what is the idea of God which evidently appears in the earliest chapters of Genesis. It is, as we have said, the monotheistic idea. The world and man owe their origin to one God and one only. This conception is fun-

damental in the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures and among all the religions of the world is found in them alone. Mohammedanism, it is true, is monotheistic, but Mohammed, no doubt, derived his view from the Hebrew and Christian faith, which in his time was known in Arabia. Account for this pure monotheism of the Bible how you may, make it the result of a long development from some lower and debased conception, the earliest form of which is lost in the obscurity of prehistoric time, or conceive of it as the primitive form of religious belief, yet the fact remains that it is the distinctive teaching of the Bible and appears in its earliest records.

Thus the Bible begins where the speculations of philosophy and science end. These cannot rest in the multiplicity of things, but seek a common ground of which all forms and forces are the manifold expression, not a few conceiving of it as impersonal in its nature. But the Biblical idea in its initial statement being purely monotheistic is also purely personal. God is represented not merely as the sum of being nor as the infinite and universal energy, without self-consciousness, and working from interior necessity, but as intelligent and volitional. Creation is the exercise of his will and is wrought according to a plan. Heaven and earth are the eternal thought of God expressed in forms of space and time and linked chain of cause and effect, and are accomplishing his purpose.

This monotheistic and therefore personal idea of God is also demanded by the profoundest thought and

insistent needs of the human soul. The greatest thinkers and teachers, even those without the range of the Bible's influence, such as Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, have nearly approached it, although not quite attaining to the full and pure conception of the Bible. You may call it anthropomorphic, if you will, that is, thinking of God after the form of the inner nature of man, or, in other words, deriving the conception of the divine nature from man's consciousness of his own rational nature; and because thus derived you may reject it. But on this ground you could reject all kinds of knowledge; for man constructs his idea of the material world not merely from impressions made on the senses, but from elemental and necessary forms of thought which his own rational nature gives. As Browning finely states in his "Paracelsus":

> "Truth is within ourselves; it takes no rise
> From outward things, whatever you may believe:
> There is an inmost centre in us all,
> Where truth abides in fullness; and around,
> Wall upon wall, the gross flesh hems it in,
> This perfect clear perception—which is truth.
> . . . *to know*
> Rather consists in opening out a way
> Whence the imprisoned splendor may escape,
> Than in effecting entrance for a light
> Supposed to be without."
> ("Paracelsus," page 27.)

The conceptions of being, force, cause, time, space, —as has been shown by the clearest thinkers, by those

who have most deeply explored and made known the workings of the human mind—are not given to us from without, but arise from within. Since outward experience is not their source but only the occasion and condition which draws them forth, it acts upon the mind as the developing fluid acts upon the sensitive photographic plate. The image is there, but this is needed to bring it into view. Natural science were impossible, then, without those preconceptions, those necessary and universal ideas, those primal truths,

> "Which, be they what they may,
> Are yet the fountain light of all our day
> Are yet a master light of all our seeing,"

which give form and coherence to what the eye perceives, the ear hears, the touch discerns, of the manifold objects of the outer world. Natural science, therefore, as science, that is, as ordered knowledge, is in this sense anthropomorphic. Its world is constructed and conceived in accordance with the thought forms which the human mind itself supplies. But these give us, or constitute, the ground on which rests our conviction of its truths. Without these elemental and necessary forms of thought our world would be one not of law, but of confusion, and all ordered knowledge would be impossible.

The doctrine of evolution shows that personality is the highest form of being. The long, progressive process of genetic development, from the primal fire-mist,

as some teach, up to now, has issued in a rational moral being,

> "Man, the consummation of this scheme
> Of being, the completion of this sphere
> Of life."
>
> ("Paracelsus," page 145.)

Beyond him, so far as regards this earth, there is no indication of a further advance. Any finite being of a different and higher kind it seems impossible to conceive. Indeed, much of philosophical speculation makes no attempt to conceive of a different and higher form, but at this point reverses the evolutionary process and turns back the line of descent toward the original fire-mist whence it started, thus conceiving the universe to be an immense self-moving clock which throughout eternal hours winds itself up and then unwinds itself, this upward and downward movement going on successively forever.

But leaving such subtle speculations to the philosophers, the evident fact is that the Bible assumes personality to be the highest form of being, ascribing it to God as well as man. It should be noted, however, that while, in the account of creation, intelligence and creative power, working toward a preconceived end, are ascribed to God, there is no direct ascription to him of a moral nature except as it is implied in the statement that man was made in the image of God; for this statement cannot refer to anything but man's spiritual nature. For while the material world is one of law there is in it no *moral* law. For moral law implies volition

and freedom. Unless man can determine himself and his actions with reference to ideal moral ends he is not in the full sense a person; he is a thing, and the law of things is the law of necessity. Here force, not will, works unconscious of its ends, unless you conceive of force as the unchanging expression of the Divine will.

The student of nature must begin with the moral world, and from that go to the physical, or he will gain no knowledge of the meaning of that imperative word *ought*. He will only be impressed by a sense of *must*. It is not strange, therefore, that so many of our naturalists are necessitarians. Their thoughts are subdued and colored by the material in which they work.

Personality, indeed, in its complete sense implies a moral nature, but, as I have said, this does not immediately appear in the account of creation. It is not until the second chapter of Genesis, and throughout those that follow, that the moral nature of God is distinctly expressed. In these man as a rational and moral creature, the height and goal of the whole creation, becomes the leading subject. He is placed in the edenic garden, to till its soil and enjoy its fruits, but he is under a command. There is a prohibition. The fruit of "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" he is not to eat. Good and evil are to be understood as moral good and evil, not physical. This prohibition is sanctioned by a penalty, that of death. But temptation comes, disobedience follows, the awful sense of sin and guilt is awakened, fear of the divine presence ensues, and man hides himself in the depths of the

garden. But the divine voice is heard announcing the infliction of the penalty; man has lost his childlike innocence and dies morally; and the forces which result in physical death begin their inevitable work. He is cast out of the garden, where happiness and peace dwelt, and becomes subject henceforth to toil, to suffering, to woe, and to the abiding sense of estrangement between himself and God. Then there is the account of the birth of children, of the beginning of envy, of hatred, and of a brother's murder, of the curse upon the murderer, of his fear and flight into the desolate land of wandering.

How vivid, how dramatic, how true is this account to the working of the conscience oppressed by the agonizing sense of sin! It is a tragedy which no dramatist has ever equalled. All the essential elements of transgression, of terror, and of woe are here. The stage is the world with heaven and hell in the dark background and the actors are mankind. Whether you interpret it as literal history, or myth, or legend, or as a pictorial presentation of man's passing from a state of mere innocence to one of moral apprehension, you must acknowledge that it expresses in historic form the inner state of the human soul when it is conscious of having chosen moral evil instead of moral good. The facts of life confirm it in every point, for every man in his individual experience passes from the edenic state of childhood to the bitter consciousness of sin and guilt and shame.

Throughout all this account of the command, of the

temptation and the fall, there appears in the clearest light the moral element in the Biblical idea of a personal God. This should be distinctly noted, for this is distinctively characteristic of the Bible. For it is not the moral attributes of the divine nature that science and philosophy dwell upon and illustrate, even when there is belief in such a God. Intelligence, power, omnipresence, omniscience, infinite and eternal existence—these mainly occupy the thoughts and awaken the awe of those who seek to know God merely through nature and man. But the Bible addresses itself directly to man's moral and religious nature by its presentation of a moral God whose ever-insistent law is moral. Hence it awakens a more abiding interest and a deeper awe than philosophy and natural science ever can. Paul states the character and aim of his ministry to be "not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by the manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God" (II Cor. 4:2). This is the profound note, struck from the beginning, when man, not the earth and its products, becomes the leading object of interest in the sacred narrative.

But man is not left to the destructive agencies and consequences which his transgression brought upon him. Dark as was the future, a ray of light shone upon it, a ray which was to broaden and brighten throughout the centuries to come. If there is sin and shame there is not the agony of despair. Righteousness and its penalties exist, but athwart the lowering

skies gleams the light of grace. The seed of the woman is to bruise the serpent's head (Gen. 3 : 15). This is the *prot-evangelium*, the first prophetic note of the gospel of redemption. It is faint, indeed, and enigmatical in form, but to us its significance is clear. It indicates that other attribute of the divine nature which no other religion so confidently affirms, the attribute of love, which is at last to lead erring man back to righteousness and peace.

The chapters which follow the account of the transgression and expulsion from the garden are mainly concerned with the growth of moral evil, which at last reaches a condition described by that impressive statement, a statement disclosing a profounder and more exact psychology than that taught in the schools. "And Jehovah saw that the wickedness of man was great and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6 : 5). Here the imagination, where thoughts take form and vivid presentation, and the heart, the seat of emotion, the sphere and source of all those forces which determine and direct volition, are made the centre of man's moral life. This conception of man is held to throughout the Bible. He is not merely a part of material nature but a spiritual intelligence standing upon and above it. Man's sin and shame is that he has fallen below his real self and plane of being, and fixes his desires upon things that cannot satisfy, upon the creature rather than the Creator.

Reaching thus a description of man's moral state we

have an account of the penalty it incurs, the almost universal destruction of human life by the waters of the flood. Whether this account is history or myth, is fact or fiction, whether it is made up of two separate and traditional accounts so clumsily pieced together that the line of demarcation can easily be traced, or is one consistent story, preserved by those who witnessed and shared in the events, "the log-book of Noah," as an eminent naturalist and also student of the Bible has called it—these, as I have said, are questions beside our present purpose. There are not wanting many scholars of high standing who see no reason for rejecting it as a record of what once occurred, accounts of which have come down in the traditions of other peoples besides the Hebrews. But our purpose here is to point out and emphasize the fact that the Biblical account of the flood is written from a purely moral and religious point of view. Other questions, whether relevant or irrelevant, should not obscure this fact. We find the same pure monotheism, the same personal conception, the same essentially moral character of God and his insistence on the supremacy of moral law, before which physical law shrinks into comparative insignificance, such as we have found in the accounts preceding it. Righteousness is an elemental attribute of the divine character, expressed in command and penalty, but no less elemental is the attribute of grace.

Shining across the o'erarching heavens, upon which the storm-clouds may still have lingered, was the bow of promise. Noah and his family had often seen and

admired its beauty, for it is the effect of laws which have existed from the earth's beginning. But now it received a new significance. It became the symbol that never again should such destruction come upon the earth. As Noah and his family, therefore, looked upon it they could go forth with hope to the repeopling and reconstruction of a perished world, sustained by the faith that God is not only just but also merciful.

Here, then, we have presented in these brief eleven chapters of primitive history, in unmistakable terms, in concrete historic form, in a record of persons and events, two essential conceptions in the Biblical idea of God. Just as often, in the opening notes of a symphony there is given in briefest terms the musical theme which the measures that follow elaborate in various complicated forms, so here righteousness and grace, justice and mercy sound clearly and harmoniously forth, attributes of the divine character which seem to some at times in conflict, as they consider God's government of the world, but which emerge at last, when revelation is complete, in a final and abiding harmony in the cross of Jesus Christ.

We pass on now to consider the patriarchal period, which begins with the call of Abraham. Between this and the primitive period there is an interval of we know not how long a time, for the chronology is uncertain. Formerly it was assumed that the genealogical records between Adam and Abraham gave immediately successive generations. Upon this assumption

Archbishop Usher's chronology, placed in the margin of King James's version, was founded. But the method of the Bible historians seems to be indicated by the genealogy of our Lord given in the gospels, which, compared with the Old Testament, omits a number of generations. Archæological discoveries in Egypt and Babylonia, also, which disclose a highly developed civilization whose origin is lost in the mists of prehistoric time, but which, in an advanced state, can apparently be traced back to seven or eight thousand years B. C., as well as the remains of man and his implements which have been dug up in Europe and America, clearly indicate that there was a much greater lapse of time than was once supposed between the advent of man upon the earth and the days of Abraham. Hence, the late Revised Versions, both English and American, omit the chronology of Usher.

This lapse of time is variously estimated. Some make it consist of hundreds of thousands of years. But such estimates rest on few and uncertain data, and seem to be largely the product of imagination. A sane and careful observer, who was an eminent geologist, the late Professor Frederick Wright, in his book "The Antiquity of Man," after considering all available facts, comes to the conclusion that man appeared upon the earth not more than about fifteen thousand years ago. When we consider that the advocates of a much longer time differ among themselves, in their estimates, to the extent of even many hundreds of thousands of years, we are less inclined to accept their

statements, resting as they appear so largely to do upon unproved assumptions rather than on facts.

With Abraham begins a clearer and fuller disclosure of the nature and character of God. Hitherto the manifestations have been less defined and more infrequent. The primitive period was the early dawn of God's self-revelation. A few stars shone here and there. A few rays were brightening with promise on the eastern horizon. But now the light grows stronger and gives greater assurance of the splendor of the coming day.

Abraham is a believer in the one supreme God, El-Elyon, "God most high, possessor of heaven and earth," to use his own expressive words. He has been called the first great monotheist, standing large and distinct against the background of ancient history. But this is doubtful. The Biblical account does not sustain it. Noah is represented as a worshipper of one God. It is true, however, according to Joshua in his final charge to the children of Israel (Joshua 24:2), that the ancestors of Abraham, including even Terah, his father, were polytheists, serving other gods than Jehovah. It is a fair conclusion, therefore, that Abraham was brought up in this belief and worshipped his father's gods. We may picture him, then, in his early life, offering his prayers and sacrifices at the altars and contemplating with religious awe the temples of the city sacred to the Moon-God, whose remains still lie beside the Euphrates River. But when he left Ur of the Chaldees on his long migrations he was seventy-five

years old and evidently was then a worshipper of Jehovah. How or when the great change in his belief took place we are not told. That there was an earlier monotheism, taught in the religious schools of Babylonia, from which the polytheism prevalent in the time of Abraham was a falling away and degradation, is held by some. If this be true, then there were not wanting external influences in his time which may help to account for his monotheistic belief. But according to the Bible history such influences alone were insufficient. It distinctly teaches that the faith of Abraham was the result of God's self-revelation. He was the subject of an immediate divine call. This call involved two essential elements; it was a command and also a promise. The command was to leave his early home and journey to a land to which he would be divinely led. The promise was threefold, viz.: that he, although at that time childless, should have descendants as innumerable as the sands of the sea and the stars of the midnight sky; that they should possess the land to which he was led; and, most significant of all, that in him and his seed should all the families of the earth be blessed. Just what form that blessing should take is not stated. It is undefined. Its full and precise significance was to be gradually revealed throughout succeeding centuries of historic events and by prophetic messengers divinely sent.

In full or in part this promise is given to Abraham seven times in the brief record of his life. Beginning with his call it is repeated at every distinct epoch of his

career: when he reached Canaan; after his separation from Lot; after his defeat of the Eastern kings; when the covenant of circumcision was established; just before the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah; and at the offering of Isaac. To it also Abraham refers when he sends his servant to obtain a wife for Isaac. All this indicates how prominent the divine promise was in the mind and life of the great patriarch. It explains his career, it determines his character; it becomes the supreme and guiding object of his faith. It is the golden key which unlocks the mysteries of the historic Revelation. Fling it away, or bury it beneath the results of a rationalistic and radical criticism, and you cannot understand God's dealings not only with the Hebrew people but with the peoples of the world. Except for the promise made to Abraham, Old Testament and New would in essential meaning be unrelated books. The Old closes with announcement of its fulfilment in the sending of the personal Messiah (see Mal. 3:1; 4:5). The New opens, after long years of silence, with references to the promise of his coming (see Luke 1:17, 55, 70, 73, 76). Mary, the mother of our Lord, ends her song of praise with celebrating the "mercy (as he spake unto our fathers) toward Abraham and his seed for ever" and Zacharias, in his words of blessing, announces the mission of his son, John the Baptist, as the fulfilment of what the prophets of Israel taught, and of the oath sworn to Abraham. Our Lord, also, in his teaching links himself and his work again and again with this prophetic past of promise, and the

Apostle Paul builds upon it his great argument for a justifying faith.

Thus the entire Bible is but the announcement and fulfilment of God's purpose and promise of world redemption. By this the Biblical idea of his nature and character is determined and expressed. Grace and mercy, which is grace in exercise, are its essential elements. To those who do not apprehend this the Bible is a sealed and strange book. To them the persons and events, which stand out so vividly and in such lifelike form on its pages, will have no vital relationship to one another. They will be like the planets of the midnight sky, whose mysterious motions no astronomer completely understood, nor could understand, until Copernicus pointed to the sun as the central and controlling orb. Then every planet was seen to move in its proper cycle, and the solar system was comprehended as a harmonious whole. So it is with the promise of a moral redemption. It shines as central and controlling in the Bible's system of Revelation, and discloses the essential significance of the Biblical idea of God.

Let us pause now for a moment and try to realize how wonderful is this experience which came to Abraham, and how great is the conception of God which it discloses. Once he seemed, and may still seem to many, an almost solitary figure, wandering over plain and mountain with flocks and herds, with no historic background except what the Biblical record suggested or supplied. But now, how marvellously the scene has

changed! The unromantic spade has dug up for us a great historic past. The Bible canvas has been filled in with persons and events, with nations and civilizations, with royal dynasties and the rise and fall of empires, with racial movements, with codes of law and religious systems, whose records were long buried beneath the mounds of Egypt, Assyria, and Babylonia. The times of Abraham are now, it is claimed, as well known as the times of Pericles in Greece. We not only can trace his wandering steps upon the map, but have become familiar with persons and events contemporary with and long preceding him. The location of his native city, Ur, is now definitely determined; at least, many archæologists so believe. He is thus no longer an almost solitary figure, standing out against an obscure Eastern sky and mingling with petty peoples of whom little was known. But if his large historic environment has become more clearly manifest by means of explorations in far Eastern lands, still our knowledge of his person and career, of his character and religious faith, of his conception of the only true God which lay at the basis of his belief, is altogether dependent on the Bible; and while its record is comparatively brief, giving only a few leading events, a few leading statements which show the nature of his belief, yet they are of the highest significance, and justify the lofty place he holds in the sacred narrative, both Old Testament and New. Yet the contrast between his external condition and this lofty place is strange, it may be, to some, and difficult of realization.

Having no fixed abode, the leader of a tribe numbering perhaps fifteen hundred or two thousand souls (which may safely be inferred from the statement that there were three hundred and eighteen trained fighting men, "born in his household"), represented as having relations with the small city kings of Palestine, among them yet not of them, not, however, the only believer in the Most High God, as the account of Melchizedek shows, still his distinction is, and no distinction could be greater, that he is the only one to whom and through whom, in him and in his seed, was the promise of Redemption made—a promise at last, after long centuries of waiting, and oftentimes obscured by doubt and disbelief, to be declared to and to bless all the nations, and so to overspread the earth.

Why, now, we may ask, was it to the leader of this relatively small tribe, small when compared with the vast empires which have lately risen from their age-long graves, whose giant forms stalk before us in the far-distant past, and the advancing steps of whose armed hosts echo still as they march across continents, undismayed by forests and rivers, by mountains and plains, to subdue strange and alien peoples to their thrones, whose pride was in slaughter and whose mission was to destroy—why was it to and through him and not to and through them that this disclosure of the character and purpose of the Most High God was given? According to merely human standards they should have been made the channels of this gracious revelation. But the ways of God are not the ways of men. They

in their final overthrow declared only the divine justice. This is the message of Isaiah concerning the Assyrian king, who "removed the bounds of the peoples and robbed their treasures" and in his haughty insolence boasted himself against the Lord Jehovah. Not to such ruthless destroyers, great as is their place and power in the estimation of the world, was the promise of Redemption given, but to the man of high religious faith, unmentioned by the national historians of his day, but a heroic figure in the records of the Bible, and known and honored where ancient conquerors and kings have been forgotten. According to every analogy of God's working this is what we should expect. In nature and in human history the beginnings of forms and of epoch-making movements are generally obscure and oftentimes difficult to trace. Rome, once the mighty mistress of the world, had its origin in times as yet unknown to recorded history, around which many myths and legends gathered, and whose earliest remains archæologists are slowly seeking to discover. So is it also with the origin of the Greeks. American history, in its most important and determining elements, began with the faith and hopes of a few pilgrims who landed in the winter storms on a stern and ice-bound coast, to carve out of the wilderness a state, now among the most powerful of the world. Christianity had its distinctive origin in a little land and obscure city, and in the person and work of one who was outwardly only a Galilean peasant.

Not, therefore, through imperial persons and events,

but through Abraham, the sojourner in lands not his own, the chieftain of a tribe of herdsmen relatively few, were the promises made; and this fact, when rightly considered, gives impressiveness and truth to what his career tells us concerning essential contents in the Biblical conception of God. As expressed by him it connects itself with all that had been disclosed in the past and looks forward to that larger disclosure that is to follow. It is an essential and important part of the progressive process of God's self-revelation. The original elements of power and wisdom, of justice and mercy, are there. But there appears also that broader and deeper conception of righteousness, a conception we owe to the Bible alone, which teaches that righteousness is not merely retributive, but involves the attribute of grace. "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" Abraham says in his plea for Sodom; that is, shall he not refrain from destroying the righteous and the wicked, shall not the presence of the one secure mercy for the other? The immorality of those cities of the plain was inexpressibly great. Vice in its vilest forms was practised not by a few, nor in secret, but openly and by "the men of the city—both young and old, all the people from every quarter" as the story of Lot distinctly states (Gen. 19:4) and clearly shows to those who read it with understanding. We need not wonder, therefore, at the complete destruction with which they were overwhelmed. But yet, while God is revealed as severely just he is also willing to be gracious. It is also revealed, as in the greater destruction

of the flood, that his moral laws are supreme, and that they are not unrelated to but oftentimes control the action of his natural laws. In his hands the forces which they guide are used as whips to scourge the unspeakable iniquities of man.

But not only in physical nature is God revealed as supreme, but also in human history, disclosing thus, when we consider the waywardness of man's will, a greater wisdom and a more commanding power. For what else does the promised blessing, which is to take centuries for its fulfilment, and is to come upon all nations, imply? Here is revealed a divine plan, clearly indicated from the beginning, involved in the predetermined destinies of a people, and which, despite the vicissitudes, the conflicts, the rise and fall of peoples, the apparently inextricable confusion of the forces which contend with one another in man's social life, is to reach a consummation in the welfare of the world.

It is therefore no merely tribal God whom Abraham worships, limited in place and power, whose sole work was to care for the members of the tribe, regardless of their character and life. Such a conception is ascribed to him by some, but it rests upon a criticism which denies historical authority to the Bible story and makes it the idealized account of a later age. But if we eliminate Abraham and the promise from the twenty centuries of Revelation, if he is not an actual historic character, and the recorded events of his life did not actually occur, then the golden key which unlocks the real inner meaning of these long-past centuries is for-

ever lost. Throughout them we shall search aimlessly in a maze of unrelated facts and hear inarticulate voices whose meaning we cannot comprehend. In Abraham and his faith, however, we continue to believe, lie all the essential germs of the Biblical idea of God.

We have dwelt thus at length upon the life and belief of Abraham, because he is the most commanding personality in the patriarchal period, and as the first father of the Hebrew people his faith determined its distinctive career. He stands large and clear on the sacred page, and to him prophets and apostles and our Lord himself refer as the divinely chosen and authoritative human source, in their germinal form, of the truths they teach.

We pass on now to consider briefly the remaining persons whose lives make up the rest of the patriarchal period and give to it religious meaning. Isaac, in whom the threefold promise begins to find fulfilment, is a less distinguished character than his father. He is milder in disposition, more quiet and retired in life. His wanderings are limited to southern Palestine. He associates with its petty kings, and on a basis of equality; but the account of him is brief and without the striking incidents in the life of Abraham. He inherits his father's wealth in flocks and herds, but of different and greater importance is his spiritual inheritance of the promised blessing. Twice it is renewed to him; once when during a famine he is commanded *not* to go down to Egypt, and again after the strife of his herds-

men with those of Gerar and the digging of the wells. He also refers to it when he sends Jacob to Paddan-Aram. It is implied in pronouncing the stolen blessing upon Jacob, and is evidently the essential element in the birthright which Jacob purchased from his brother. Thus appears once more conspicuously in the Biblical record those conceptions which bind the patriarchal lives together and give them a common religious meaning. It is the God of his father, the God of Righteousness and Grace whom Isaac worships, and in whom he trusts. Living in a pagan land, where altars were built and sacrifices offered to many gods, and where religion was largely sensual and licentious, he is still a monotheist, holding a pure though undeveloped faith, whose essential elements he had inherited.

The story of Jacob is of great human interest. It is an account of one who beginning on a low moral and religious plane developed at last a character worthy of respect and emulation. He stands out in clear contrast with his brother Esau, whose interests lie mainly, if not altogether, in the material world, who is unable to see the real significance of the birthright and in a moment of physical exhaustion sells it for a mess of pottage. That to Jacob it meant merely the headship of the family and the inheritance of a double portion of his father's wealth is not to be inferred from the Bible narrative. To him it would seem to have meant mainly the divine blessing involved in the promise, as the story of his later life apparently shows. That he understood its full meaning is not to be maintained.

That could only be disclosed by its complete fulfilment. But that the great promise influenced and determined his religious life appears in the fact that it is directly repeated to him at decisive epochs, once on his way to Paddan-Aram in its complete threefold form in his dream at Bethel; again in part, but evidently implying the whole, when he is told by God to return unto the land of his fathers; again after his return and when he had built an altar to Jehovah and had commanded the putting away of foreign gods among his people; and once again, in his old age at Beersheba on his journey to Egypt to see Joseph, his long-lost son, so deeply mourned. To the first of these he refers in his final sickness. Frequently also he speaks of the God of his fathers, which implies the revelation God had made to them.

All this clearly shows that through him is carried on the knowledge of the one true God whose gracious purpose includes not only the Hebrew people but also all mankind. The stream of Revelation, however, runs throughout the patriarchal period within fixed and narrow limits. There are other lines of descent from Abraham, but it is not turned aside to them. It was written: "In Isaac shall thy seed be called." But with Jacob the promise widens beyond the limits of a family. There is no selection of one of his many children. All are included within the limits of the promise, and are also the channels by whom it is to be conveyed to the entire world. Individuals, nay generations, might fail to apprehend and receive its blessings and turn to

the worship of other gods, but the people who have descended from the patriarch Jacob stand out with striking distinctness among the peoples of the earth as the possessors of a religion which presents the loftiest conceptions of the nature and character of God.

It was evidently not the purpose of the writers of Biblical history to trace in detail the lives of the fathers of the Hebrew race. It is not biographies that they have written. God, not man, was their supreme subject, or rather God speaking in and through man of himself; and it is the progressive course of this revealed word that is distinctly traced in the sacred books.

We, therefore, conclude this lecture with pointing out how in the career of Joseph the essential elements of the conception of God continue to appear. He is still the God of promise, the God of righteousness and grace. Joseph's life is recorded more at length than that of any other of the sons of Jacob. It has, as Professor Moulton tells us, the character of epic story. The favorite of his father, envied and hated by his brothers, sold by them as a slave, this young Hebrew prince, as he has been called, becomes the object of a lawless passion by his master's wife, resists her advances, is falsely accused and thrown into prison, and is then made, under Pharaoh, the ruler of all Egypt. His life, so filled with sudden and striking changes, illustrates with impressive power that kind of character which faith in the God of promise alone can form. Tested by temptation to sensual sin, and also by the subtler and more persistent temptations of undeserved

misfortunes and then of the sudden possession of autocratic power, he yet never fails to fulfil the duties of his station, whether as slave or prisoner, and so rises to leadership in each position, revealing those traits which fitted him at last to exercise the powers belonging to imperial rule. Separated in youth from the religious influences of the home, surrounded henceforth by the splendors and attractions of Egyptian worship, with its innumerable gods, its elaborate ritual, its magnificent temples, its dominant and haughty priesthood, marrying the daughter of the priest of On, where the great sun-god was adored, connected thus with the most powerful sacerdotal family of his time—yet in the midst of all these moulding influences which would have drawn many away from the faith of their fathers, he remains true to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He regards him with reverential fear, as he tells his brethren when testing their truth and before he reveals himself to them (Gen. 42:18). He trusts his providential care, saying, after making himself known, that "God did send me before you to preserve life" (Gen. 45:5). In his message to his father he tells him that "God hath made me lord of all Egypt" (Gen. 45:9). To Joseph God is also the interpreter of dreams, as he says to the butler and baker and Pharaoh (Gen. 40:8; 41:16). God also determines future events and controls the forces of nature, for in making known the meaning of Pharaoh's dream, he tells the king that "the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass" (Gen. 41:32).

To Joseph God is also the personal source and executor of moral law. "How, then," said he to the wife of Potiphar, the Egyptian captain of the guard, "can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" (Gen. 39:9).

But while these conceptions of the divine nature and character could be found in the religion and moral code of Egypt; while, also, as some scholars claim, back of all the prevalent and degraded polytheism there may have been the lofty monotheistic belief with which Joseph could deeply sympathize, yet there was not found there the distinctive element of the religion of the Hebrews. To no Egyptian priest or king had been given the revelation of the promise. But throughout his life, as shepherd boy in Palestine, as slave and prisoner and autocratic ruler in Egypt, this was the distinctive faith of Joseph, the elemental force in developing his character, which shielded him in temptation, sustained him in the guidance of an empire, and also, greater even and nobler than this exalted work, led him to be gracious and forgiving to his brethren when their guilty consciences made them fearful of retribution for their crime. At the end of a long life Joseph said unto his brethren: "I die; but God will surely visit you, and bring you up out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob—and ye shall carry up my bones from hence" (Gen. 50:24, 25). Thus, in the eloquent words of the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, after enumerating the religious heroes of Israel's past, "these all died in faith, not having

received the promises but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (Heb. 11: 13). By their faith in the fulfilment of the divine promise they were sustained, and in this faith lay the distinctive and differentiating conception through the patriarchal period of the Biblical idea of God.

III

THE BIBLICAL IDEA OF GOD

IN THE MOSAIC PERIOD, OR AS FOUND IN EXODUS, LEVITICUS, NUMBERS, AND DEUTERONOMY

We have traced the Biblical idea of God through the primitive and patriarchal periods and are now to consider the period between the exodus from Egypt and the conquest and settlement of Palestine. From the death of Joseph to the birth of Moses the time as generally computed is about four hundred years, although some chronologists would reduce it to a little more than half that number. However this may be, there is, at any rate, a long period of silence concerning which no historical details are given. The descendants of Jacob are herdsmen, dwelling in the fertile land of Goshen, in the northern part of Egypt and east of the branches of the Nile. There are not wanting indications that to some extent they had felt the influence of the high material civilization which the Egyptians had developed. At first, as relatives of Joseph, and also doubtless because they were an Asiatic people, they were welcomed and kindly treated. For the Hyksos, or shepherd kings, who were themselves Asiatics, had conquered Egypt and were then rulers of the land. How long their rule continued is a matter of dispute. At some time, however, before the birth of Moses, it had ended, and the native Egyptian kings had regained

their lost power. This explains the statement at the beginning of the book of Exodus that "a king arose who knew not Joseph," one of the many statements of sacred history upon which late discoveries cast light and to which confirmation is given. It was then that the oppression of the Hebrews began. Because of the fact that they were Asiatics, like the Hyksos kings, the Egyptian Pharaoh feared that, dwelling as they did on the northeastern border-land, should another invasion occur they might join with their racial relatives and help to reconquer the country. Hence they were subjected to severe toil in building "store-cities, Pithom and Raamses," and the attempt was also made to reduce their numbers by putting to death, at birth, the male children. These store-cities have been discovered and excavated by Naville the French archæologist and their remains confirm the Bible history.

It is a familiar story how Moses escaped the fate purposed by the Pharaoh. Evidently it was the result not of a series of fortuitous circumstances and events, but of a plan formed by his mother. This is indicated by the placing of the little ark, in which the babe lay, where the daughter of the king was wont doubtless to come to bathe, by the expected appeal of helpless infancy to a woman's heart, and by stationing the sister to watch and to suggest the child's mother as the nurse. Thus it came about that throughout his earliest years—for how long it is not stated—Moses grew up in a Hebrew home. During these years the deepest and most lasting impressions are made on the mind

and heart, especially those of the family religion. That they were never effaced from the heart of Moses is clearly shown by his subsequent career.

But they might have been effaced by the subtle and continuous influences which surrounded him throughout his later youth and manhood, for he became the adopted son of the Egyptian princess, was instructed in all Egyptian wisdom (Acts 7 : 22), subjected to the moulding force of the luxuries of the Egyptian court and the splendors of the idolatrous worship of the Egyptian religion, and he might perhaps have attained to the rule of an Egyptian prince. Around this period of his life many Jewish legends have gathered. But rejecting these products of the fancy for the sober truth of the Bible narrative, it is certain that he never forgot he was the son of a Hebrew mother and one of the heirs of the divinely given promise. He therefore never lost his sympathy with his toiling and suffering brethren, and when by an act expressive of this sympathy he killed an Egyptian oppressor and was compelled to flee from the vengeful wrath of the king he became, at forty years of age, himself a shepherd in the mountains of Midian, and for forty years more, during this quiet life so conducive to meditation, brooded doubtless over the knowledge and experience gained in Egypt, and especially over the distinctive characteristics and truths of the family religion, the gracious revelations made to the ancient fathers of his race, and the predetermined destiny of that race—that it should become a channel of blessing to all the world.

That these were among the subjects of his thought the whole character of the mighty work of his later life would seem clearly to indicate. The simple and narrow interests of the ordinary shepherd occupation do not suffice to breed great men who are to be leaders in great events. There must be something more and greater to awaken the deeper forces and nobler ambitions of the human soul. Nature must indeed contribute the inborn genius which the foremost leaders of mankind reveal; but there must be added the formative influences of education and the quickening power of great occasions which call that genius forth. God uses men and means fitted for his ends. Thus Moses was natively endowed with powers which few men have possessed; and by his training as a Hebrew boy, when he was taught the sacred traditions of his race, by his associations with the wise rulers and learned priests of Egypt, and by his secluded and meditative shepherd life, when these moulding influences sank more deeply into his spirit and fashioned it for future uses—by all these he was being fitted for the great legislative work he afterward accomplished of forming a people into a nation by means of a great hope and an organized law.

Out of this condition in the solitude of the desert he was suddenly called by the voice of God speaking from the burning bush. Centuries had passed since that voice had been heard on earth. The last time was when God spoke to Jacob at Beersheba, as he was going down to Egypt, and bade him fear not, and at the same time renewed the promise. There is no ac-

count of such a supernatural event in the life of Joseph, although to him was given the spirit of divination and the wisdom to guide the destinies of an empire. We might have thought that such divine voices would be frequent; and they would have been, if, as many claim, all accounts of supernatural events are only the work of man's myth-making imagination. But the Bible distributes such supernatural occurrences with no lavish hand. There is a significant reserve in its accounts. Only at times of supreme importance, when epochal changes are taking place, does God miraculously manifest himself; and herein lies no slight proof that the Bible is a historical record not merely of the ways of man but also of the ways of God.

When God spoke to Moses from the burning bush, the first words identified him with the God of the past, who had spoken to the patriarchs. "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." It was no new and strange deity who made himself known and commanded obedience. A celebrated German scholar has tried, in direct contradiction to the Bible, to show that the God, whose message Moses brought to his people, was a Kenite god worshipped by his father-in-law Jethro. But German scholars delight in fanciful and theoretic reconstructions of Biblical history. All such attempts, however, show only the ingenuity of the writer and contribute nothing to our knowledge of the facts, except, it may be, in stimulating a more thorough research into the foundations of our faith. Unfortu-

nately, many, relying implicitly on the authority attached to great names, are misled by such critical reconstructions, and their belief in the historic truth of the Bible is lessened if not destroyed. It is time that we cease to sit with childlike, unquestioning reverence at the feet of such teachers, who however wide and minute their scholarship are not always clear and consistent thinkers. The study and the classroom need the education which the more vital and complex life beyond their walls alone can give if we are to be saved from conclusions contrary to the common sense of the world. Had Moses brought to his people a Kenite deity, hitherto unknown to them, his task of winning their acceptance and following would have been far greater than it was, if not impossible. There is no stronger conservative force than the religious spirit. Inherited religions are not lightly and easily changed. It was only when Moses announced to the Hebrew people a new revelation of the God of their fathers, and when also this new revelation met the conditions of their bondage, answered their groanings and their prayers, and gave gracious announcement of relief through the near fulfilment of the long-before-given and long-deferred promise that he could secure a hearing. When the silence of many centuries is broken the same voice speaks and it speaks the same message of a great hope. The essential elements are there, but there is also an advance. For in the Bible God's self-revelation, as I have said, is progressive. In this respect it is like the manifestation of himself in nature.

Another step is taken in the fulfilment of the promise. Great increase in the posterity has already taken place, as was foretold. Now there is to be the first movement toward the possession of the promised land. The third and greatest element remains, but centuries must pass before the fulness of time shall come when it shall be fulfilled.

The progression in the self-revelation of the divine nature and character does not, however, consist merely in this partial fulfilment of the promise. Moses is convinced that he hears the voice of the God of his fathers, and hides his face lest he might see God and die. But there was no visible form except the burning bush, which was not consumed. Then when he has received his commission to lead his people out of bondage, and shrinks as every truly great man will shrink from the greatness of the work, saying, "Who am I that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" and is assured that God will be with him, he seeks to know the divine name, saying: "When I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, the God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say unto me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, *I am that I am.* Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, *I am* hath sent me unto you" (Ex. 3:13, 14).

These words, *I am that I am,* are remarkable for their brief simplicity and profound significance. They have been translated in various ways. In the margin of the

American Standard Version, beside that of the text which is here given, they are rendered: *I am, because I am,* or *I am who am,* or *I will be that I will be.* This indicates some uncertainty as to their precise meaning, and scholars are divided in the support of each rendering. But the revisers, both English and American, have adopted the same translation, which gives it the great weight of their authority. Yet much is to be said in favor of the rendering: *I will be that I will be.* For while the idea of being here expressed is an idea underlying all others, beyond which the human mind cannot go, for even power, a fundamental conception, implies some kind of existence which exercises it, and God is here identified with being in its ultimate form, yet the Hebrew mind, unlike the Greek, was not metaphysical in its nature. It did not delight in curious inquiries concerning ultimate reality, thus losing itself in the formless mists of abstract truth. It dealt rather, as I have said, with truth in its concrete and experiential form; and it is through the Hebrew mind that God has especially revealed himself. Moreover, the future rendering is in harmony with God's disclosure of himself in the promise. Not mere being, therefore, a vague conception taken by itself, but being made continuously manifest in coming historic persons and events is ascribed to God, and, while culminating in one supreme person and event, does not end even then, but goes on with progressive power until the whole earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the truth and grace of the living God. There is thus, to use Bacon's fine

phrase, a "germinant and springing fulfilment" suggested by the future form of the divine name. "Yesterday, to-day, and forever" are found in it, but with especial emphasis on *forever*.

It should be noted, also, that this divine name, whatever rendering you may choose, is expressed in terms of self-consciousness or personality. God says of himself, "*I am*," or "*I will be*." This is not a statement of vague, indefinite, incomprehensible, impersonal being. Psychologists and philosophers may seek to destroy confidence in the reality of the self by questions of seeming wisdom which no one can adequately answer. But, as was said in the first lecture, among all certainties there is nothing more certain than the reality of the self. It underlies and appears in all convictions of the human mind. You must radically change all languages, eliminating much, and reorganize all human society, transforming its essential structure, if you would conform these to the doctrine that the self is an unreal conception of the mind. The religion and philosophy of India have taught that the self is an illusion, or at most a momentary bubble on the limitless sea of impersonal being. But such religion and philosophy degrades man and destroys the joy and freedom of his life. Moreover, the very statement of doubt or denial involves the affirmation of the self. If you say, as I have sometimes heard students just entering on the study of philosophy say, with all the confidence of unlearned youth, "I do not know that I exist," the reply is, "Who does not know?" and they inevitably

answer "I do not know." While, therefore, the terms they use are in the form of a negation, their answer involves an affirmation. In the very doubt there is asserted the existence of the personal self. This was long ago effectively pointed out by St. Augustine. But there seems to be nothing so impervious to truth as the human mind. The same old errors find confident and constant repetition, and systems of philosophy are each generation built anew, as if they did not rest on the shifting sands of mere opinion but on the solid basis of the facts of consciousness. For the ultimate deliverances of consciousness are the foundations of all knowledge, and by them we judge all forms of truth and error. They are clear and convincing to the human mind, although they may not be made the subject of direct and reflective investigation. It is only the mind confused and lost in the mazes of philosophic systems to whom they are obscured. When, therefore, Moses made known to the Hebrew people this divine name, expressive of a personal consciousness and of an abiding selfhood, he was easily understood. They accepted it at once as authorizing his leadership. It would be clear also to Pharaoh. For the religious philosophy of Egypt is said to have affirmed the existence of a universal and personal being the unseen reality back of and beneath all visible and tangible phenomena. Pharaoh indeed disclaims any knowledge of Jehovah, the God of the Hebrews, but this may merely mean that he knows no god of that name worshipped by the Egyptians.

Much has been made by some scholars of the statement made to Moses, "I am Jehovah" (or Yaveh, as it is often now more exactly written), "and I appeared unto Abraham and unto Isaac, and unto Jacob as God Almighty, but by my name Jehovah I was not known unto them" (Ex. 6 : 23). This, however, is to insist on a rigid literalness of interpretation. The word Jehovah, as Doctor Orr says in his "Problem of the Old Testament," is not to be taken as a mere vocable. To the Hebrews, as to primitive peoples generally, the value of a name lay not in its sound but in its meaning. Jehovah, while used in earlier days among the Hebrews, and not unknown among other peoples, as the tablets of Babylonia have shown, in and from the time of the exodus possessed a deeper significance, declared and recognized through the ministry of Moses. There was an advance in the knowledge of its meaning. Not merely self-existence and power, but compassion and the putting forth of power in the redemption of his people was more fully indicated. "I know their sorrows," God said to Moses, "and am come down to deliver them" (Ex. 3 : 7).

As has been said, the self-revelation of God is mainly by events and the personal experiences of individuals. This is what makes the Bible a vital book and enables it to appeal to all classes and conditions, to every age and clime. Hence in the career of Moses God speaks not alone out of the burning bush, but with increasing intensity and effect by means of the ten plagues. It is true that they add nothing essential to the idea of God

disclosed in the creation. He who made the world must also control the world. God, therefore, now makes manifest his power and grace in so using the forces of nature as to secure the welfare of his people, accomplish the fulfilment of the promise, and make himself known to the oppressor as well as to the oppressed. "The Egyptians," said he to Moses, "shall know that I am Jehovah when I stretch forth my hand upon Egypt" (Ex. 7:5), and also to Israel: "Ye shall know that I am Jehovah your God who bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians" (Ex. 6:7).

The plagues in themselves were not new and strange experiences. They are known in Egypt to-day, and sometimes occur in their natural order within the limits of a year. Their miraculous character consisted in their greater intensity, in their subjection to the command of Moses, in the distinction made between the dwellings of the Hebrews and the Egyptians, and in the end for which they were used of rescuing the children of Israel from bondage. Nature and the supernatural are never opposed in the Bible. The one is God's ordinary way of working; the other is above the ordinary to secure results beyond the scope of nature's mechanism. The supernatural is the world of will and freedom; the natural is that of necessity and physical causation. Thus considered as supernatural events, the plagues reveal the moral nature of God. They make known his power, justice, and grace, elemental attributes of which the entire Bible is the supreme revelation.

It is not possible, nor necessary, within the scope of these lectures, to trace the Hebrew history in detail. The unfolding of the Biblical idea of God is mainly found in the great epochs of that history. In the Mosaic period, beginning with the rescue from Egypt, it reaches its culmination in the giving of the law. The story of this is of impressive dramatic power. The scene, as was fitting, is set among lofty mountains rising to a height of more than six thousand feet, in the midst of which stands Sinai, sacred once, it is said, as the site where Sin, the moon-god of Ur, was worshipped, but having now a vastly greater sacredness, because the God of Israel, out of lightnings and thunderings and earthquakes and clouds darkly shrouding the mountain's summit, with awe-awakening voice, uttered the ten words which to this day to Jew and Christian are a supreme expression of his will.

It has been said, and to me it seems to have been rightly said, that if nothing else proves the special inspiration of the great Hebrew lawgiver it is proved by the Decalogue. For who among the lawgivers of the world has given such a summary of religious truth and moral duty? Not Solon, not Lycurgus, not the great code of Hammurabi has stated the obligations which belong to the relationships of man with man with such brevity, simplicity, directness, and comprehensive scope. It covers all essential relationships, conserves all essential values, inculcates all essential principles of action. Life, property, truth, the purity and integrity of the family, which is the unit of society, are secured if these commandments are obeyed. The first of the

second table, "Honor thy father and thy mother that thy days may be long in the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee," imposes a duty which is the origin and type of all human obedience. Beginning with the child, it insures that subordinate attitude toward all rightful authority which is the strength and glory of the man and constitutes the elemental force and safety of the social fabric. For out of the insubordination of childhood and youth spring the destruction of the state and the reign of every ruthless passion. In the last commandment, "Thou shalt not covet," is indicated the ultimate source of all the social evils which the others seek to guard against. For if men do not covet what is not their own there would be no murder, nor adultery, nor theft, nor falsehood. Thus sin, in its last analysis, is identified with selfishness, and its secret source is found in the human heart.

But the deepest truth of the ten words is found in their religious teaching, and in the vital connection between this and their moral precepts. The codes of Confucius and Gautama Buddha, however ethically noble and comprehensive they may be, are not rooted in the religious consciousness and convictions of mankind. They are agnostic in character, neither affirming nor denying God's existence, but merely ignoring it. The Mosaic code, however, begins with the affirmation, "I am Jehovah thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage," thus setting forth and confirming by a series of impressive historic events his loving-kindness and tender mercy.

Then follows the first commandment. "Thou shalt have no other gods before [or beside] me."

It would seem that in these words monotheism is clearly taught; and so the Jewish and Christian churches have always believed. But by some modern scholars it is claimed that nothing more is indicated than monolatry, that is, the worship of one god alone, although the existence of other gods is admitted. Ethical monotheism, as it is called, is held to have been first taught by the prophets of the eighth century—Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah. But this contention rests on certain presumptions concerning the early religion of Israel which we cannot consider now, but will refer to when we discuss the teaching of these prophets. Here it is only necessary to say that, accepting the Biblical history on its face value, we have found monotheism in the earlier portions of the history, a fact not denied by those scholars who yet deny its historic value. It would be strange, therefore, when at this time so great a religious teacher has appeared and so much of an advance in the unfolding of religious truth is being made, that in the basic idea of all religion there should be a falling away from the high position hitherto attained and an approach to the degrading polytheism of other peoples. With that in its extreme extent and lowest forms Moses was acquainted. His life in Egypt familiarized him with it. If, however, he was God's messenger to his people, as from this time onward the entire Bible claims, he could have taught nothing else than the existence of the one true God and of him

alone. The Mosaic code, then, is founded on a pure and exalted monotheism, and its moral precepts are presented as God's commandments. Not, therefore, in physical nature, impressive and manifold as are its laws, but in the moral world the will of God finds its supreme expression. It is in this that the legislation of Moses exhibits its distinctive character and in this lies one of the secrets of its power. It is an appeal not to the intellect alone but to the conscience of mankind. It is an appeal, also, sustained by an innate consciousness of a universal power which makes for righteousness and truth.

There is taught, also, in the Decalogue God's invisible and intangible nature which no earthly form can represent. Image-worship, so universal, so intimately associated with the prevalent polytheism, was forbidden. The cherubim, whose wings overshadowed the mercy-seat, did not body forth the unseen God, and within the ark of the covenant, in the Holy of Holies, as already noted, was found only the moral and religious law.

The sacredness of the divine name, which is expressive of the divine nature, is also strictly enforced. Guilt is attached to all vain uses of it. Thus reverence for God was inculcated, and language, which so intimately expresses character, was to be purified from all profanity.

But while the introductory words teach God's redemptive mercy, the second commandment teaches also his even-handed and retributive justice, as well as

his abiding grace. He will visit iniquity with certain punishment; but at the same time sin is declared to be self-destructive within the limits of the third and fourth generations and loving-kindness is shown unto thousands of generations of those who love God and keep his commandments. Thus mercy is exalted beyond justice as the leading attribute revealed in the divine administration of the world. No conflict between them is suggested, but "mercy seasons justice" and secures what in all government is the noblest end of law, not retribution but obedience. It is the end which lawmakers have doubtless aimed at, but have relied mainly, if not altogether, on force and penalty to secure. But these alone have tended to brutalize and harden the offender. Mercy, which does not condone nor minimize the evil, and does not arbitrarily set aside its consequences, this alone can change the spirit and purpose of him who does the evil, for it alone touches and quickens the deepest emotions of the heart and thus subdues the stubborn obduracy of the will. Not the law but the gospel is that divine power which wins the world to a new obedience; and this is prefigured in the Old Testament even in the giving of the law from the frowning heights of Sinai. The church seems sometimes to have forgotten this and to have relied too largely on the terrors of retribution. But while law is to be set forth and enforced, and its results are not to be ignored, yet, as Paul says, we are saved by hope, and it is the goodness of God which leads us to repentance.

Lastly, a day of rest was set apart, not merely for freedom from toil, but for the better cultivation of the higher nature, which the cares and labors of the week too often tend to limit or prevent. The Sabbath is one of the great religious institutions, established, as our Lord tells us, for the race, to be observed and hallowed, that the religion of the Bible may not perish from the world.

Looking now at the Decalogue as a whole we shall find that its great and distinctive character does not lie merely in its moral precepts. Other moral codes, even those of savages, state and enforce these. It lies rather in what we may call its architectural plan. For the genius of an architect is shown not so much by the materials he uses as by the stately symmetry and beauty of their arrangement and form. All parts are combined into one splendid whole to express a single great conception. Thus in the Decalogue the Hebrew lawgiver has selected the rights and duties that are fundamental and joined them in an essential relationship with the profoundest religious truths. It would clearly seem that this is a work beyond the power of an uninspired human mind. Such certainly is the claim of the Bible, and such we believe to have been the truth. The ten words are spoken not by the voice of Moses but by the voice of God.

We might have thought that such a law, so given, especially in connection with events disclosing supernatural power, would have made immediate and lasting impression on the minds of those to whom it was

commanded. But, while Moses was in the mount, the people, forgetful of the gracious way in which they had been led, and saying "As for this Moses we know not what is become of him," turned aside to the worship of the golden calf. Then the just anger of Jehovah waxed hot against them, and punishment severe and fearful fell at once upon them, for they suffered a great slaughter. But this is not the most impressive part of this event. It is after this scene of sin and retribution, when Moses had returned to the mountain and hewn out anew the two tables of the law, that Jehovah descended in the cloud and proclaimed his character in these wonderful and ever-memorable words: "Jehovah, Jehovah, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in loving-kindness and truth, keeping loving-kindness for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and upon the children's children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation" (Ex. 34 : 6, 7).

Where in all religious literature of tribes or nations will you find a statement such as this? Not infrequently the remark is heard that the God of the Old Testament is harsh, capricious, merciless; that his rule is merely retributive, and that only in the New Testament he appears as gracious and forgiving. But such remarks rest on ignorance or a failure to comprehend the fulness of God's revelation of himself. Once more, as we shall have occasion again and again to point out, it must be said that, in dealing with this world so sin-

ful, so guilty, so sorrowing, his law is supremely *redemptive* in its end and nature. This the Apostle Paul affirms, saying that it is God's purpose "to sum up all things in Christ" and that the working out of the divine plan is "to the praise of the glory of his grace" (Eph. 1 : 6, 10). But Paul only stated in more explicit terms what was spoken to the Hebrew lawgiver more than thirty centuries ago. Law is only a uniform mode of working, and among rational beings involves ends to be secured. It expresses God's ways in both the material and moral worlds.

If we have no belief in God and are without the knowledge of his ways and ends, to us the worlds of nature and of man are a chaos meaningless, inexpressible, awakening in thoughtful minds to whom the Bible is a sealed book both horror and despair. Looking upon the surging forces of evil and destruction which evermore contend with and apparently overwhelm the good, and which seem to make up this little world of ours, they have used language like that of the guilt-worn Macbeth:

> "Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
> That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
> And then is heard no more: it is a tale
> Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
> Signifying nothing. . . ."

But this extreme expression may not be alone the utterance of a guilty soul, oppressed by a sense of sin and appalled by the cloud of death which darkens

around our earthly end. Profound and noble minds, unillumed by the light of revealed truth, have felt the mystery and apparent hopelessness of human life. To the Greeks the joy and beauty of the golden age lay in the past, in the early dawn of life's brief day. Their philosophers and poets saw no shining morn beyond the unfathomed darkness of its close. And, it is true, there are expressions of doubt in the literature of Israel occasioned by the religious experiences of individuals in times of trouble. Such are found in the Psalms and especially in the book of Job. But the Hebrew mind, as expressed in its great teachers, looked confidently to the future. There was to them a divinely guided, progressive movement to issue in the establishment of a kingdom of God, an abiding kingdom of righteousness and truth. It is on this conviction alone, in the midst of the stress and storm of the conflict of evil forces, which the age-long history of man reveals, that we can stand hopeful and serene.

It was this conviction that sustained the great Hebrew lawgiver as he led his people from Egyptian bondage. No one who would benefit mankind ever contended with difficulties harder to overcome. They lay not in external conditions, in the desert and the enemies to be met, but rather in the character and spirit of the people he would help. For they were "stiff-necked and rebellious," ever fearful and complaining when hindrances were to be overcome, unmindful of Egyptian slavery and toil, longing for the flesh-pots they had left, and without faith in the fulfilment of the

promise, a people lacking hope and the courage which hope brings. But with a sublime patience, sustained by a trust in God's presence and help which never faltered but once, Moses overcame these difficulties which would have broken down a weaker and less noble spirit, and at last with conquest and success behind him stood upon Nebo's Mount, overlooking the promised land which he was to see but not to enter, and dying there was buried in an unmarked grave, which no man has ever seen, having finished the work to which he had been called.

The book of Deuteronomy sums up and restates the Mosaic legislation. Concerning this book to-day there is an intense conflict of critical opinion. Radical scholars ascribe it to the time of Josiah, about 621 B. C., gotten up to bring about a religious reform, the work of certain priests and prophets. Some allow that its contents consist of a much earlier legislation but that its form is new. In plain terms, then, the book as we have it is a pious fraud. But, as opposed to this view, it is only necessary here to point out that the book itself in distinct and positive terms claims to give the words of Moses, giving the time when and the place where he, at the close of his life, in a series of eloquent orations, recounted the events from Sinai to the plain of Moab, and restated the law with the aim of securing obedience to its commandments. It is a continuous appeal to conscience and will. There is in it an awe-inspiring litany of curses and blessings. It adds nothing essential to what had been already taught concern-

ing the nature and character of God. But it states in more explicit terms his unity and sole existence and that he is the supreme object of love and worship. "Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our God is one Jehovah, and thou shalt love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy might" (Deut. 6:4, 5). "Know, therefore, this day and lay it to thy heart that Jehovah he is God in heaven above and upon the earth beneath. There is none else" (Deut. 4:39). "Behold, unto Jehovah, thy God, belongeth heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is therein" (Deut. 10:14). "For Jehovah your God, he is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, the mighty and the terrible, who regardeth not persons nor taketh reward" (Deut. 10:17). Could monotheism be more exactly and positively stated than in these impressive words?

But this one God is a *moral* God, a truth which cannot be too often nor too strongly stated. In the song with which Deuteronomy ends and which gives the last words of Moses and reveals him as a poet as well as a legislator and orator, he says of God:

> "His work is perfect.
> For all his ways are justice.
> A God of faithfulness and without iniquity,
> Just and right is he."
> (Deut. 32: 3, 4.)

This righteousness and justice, here proclaimed in words, is also shown in act. The inflicting of penalty on his people, something which a merely tribal god is

not supposed to do, has all along declared it. But it is with even more impressiveness declared in the destruction of the Canaanites. This is sometimes said to have been the ruthless exercise of arbitrary power. But to one who understands the licentious character of their religion it will not seem so. Certainly the Bible says that it was because the cup of their iniquity was full. "For the wickedness of these nations Jehovah thy God doth drive them out from before thee" (Deut. 9:5), a statement more than once repeated. Yet it was not because of the righteousness of Israel that they had been chosen (Deut. 9:5, 6), but because of the divine grace, a grace declared in the promise, and not to be confined to Israel, but at last to be shown to all the nations of the earth. Again and again throughout this book, which, it has been said, possesses an eloquence beyond that of the world's most famous orators, Moses refers to the promise made to Abraham. It is the key-note of his legislation. It links past and present and future in an underlying harmony which at last will overcome earth's discords and resolve them into one with itself.

I have thus far made no mention of the law of ceremonies. Large space is given to it in the Bible and the directions are specific and minute. The tabernacle, with its elaborate furniture, is twice described; and one entire book, Leviticus, is given to the ritual of offerings. There are also other ceremonial laws in Exodus and Numbers. Is all this meaningless, an inheritance from a largely ritualistic past, when forms and not

moral duties mainly constituted the religion of the people, or is it a much later addition, elaborated during the captivity and brought back to Jerusalem at the return? It is certainly given as the work of Moses, and woven into the historic record of events so closely that you cannot tear ceremony and event apart without mutilating all. If, however, we accept the interpretation given in the Epistle to the Hebrews, the law of ceremonies had a profound and enduring significance. It really, though in a veiled way, embodied the promise. For it was the type and symbol of a reality yet to come, a shadow cast before of a person and event which the centuries following were to reveal. In other words, the temple prefigured the incarnate Christ (John 2:19–21), and the altar with its sacrificial offerings shadowed forth the cross, and the sacrifice thereon of the Son of God. I do not say that this was definite and clear to even the most intelligent worshippers in the centuries preceding the coming of our Lord, any more than how the promised blessing was to be realized was definite and clear to ancient believers, but such is the teaching of Christ and his apostles and those whom the apostles taught; and it illuminates what otherwise to us would be useless acts and needless requirements. They kept alive the sense of sin, the need of its atonement, and of a priestly mediator between God and man, and thus prepared the way for the gospel. When that was announced in its fulness and completion the types and symbols which prefigured it must necessarily pass away. Only the moral law re-

mains, because its foundations lie in the essential natures of God and man, and its fulfilment on the part of man is the end which the gospel seeks.

Among all lawgivers who have formulated historic codes by which nations have been organized, Moses stands foremost and alone. Tried by the decisive test of time his code, although more than thirty centuries have passed away since its enactment, still endures, and in its distinctive features still marks and differentiates a people. The nations made separate from all others by the laws of Solon, or Lycurgus, or Hammurabi perished long ago beneath the conquering feet of other nationalities which themselves have been destroyed. Even Rome, which once seemed as enduring as her seven hills, lives only in the broken fragments of her fallen grandeur and in the legal forms and spirit which have been adopted by the peoples who overcame her. The maxims of Confucius, it is true, still characterize the life of China, and millions still adhere to the teaching of Buddha. The Koran, by its doctrines and precepts, still distinguishes the followers of Mohammed. But these have never yet felt the power of those destructive forces which have made the Jew an outcast among the peoples of the earth. With no national home, no king, no organized government, no temple nor altars where his fathers worshipped, scattered among all and persecuted by all, the Jew still retains his peculiar character, and, so far as his conditions will allow, still observes and is marked by the law of Moses. He is destined, we believe, at last to give up that dis-

tinctive character, yet will still abide by the moral elements of the law, but with nobler and more efficient motives through his acceptance of the fulfilment of the promise in the redemptive work of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Then the work of Moses for his people and for the world will have been completed through the full unfolding and acceptance, in a historic person and event, of all the elements that are essential in the contents of the Biblical idea of God. To that day, from the heights of Sinai, across all the intervening years, the great lawgiver looked forward with prophetic eye and undoubting faith. That it may hasten must be the prayer of every one who believes that the Bible is the self-revelation of the living God and of his eternal purpose and plan.

IV

THE BIBLICAL IDEA OF GOD

DURING THE PERIOD OF THE JUDGES AND THE TIMES OF ELIJAH AND ELISHA, AND IN THE WRITINGS OF THE PROPHETS

THE Mosaic period may be extended throughout the conquest and settlement of the promised land, during which the influence of the great lawgiver was predominant. It was a period covering but a few years, yet most important in determining the future religious development of the people of Israel. They always looked back to the teaching and work of Moses as giving them a true idea of Jehovah their God and also an authoritative standard of obedience to him. However much they wandered from the paths he had marked out, and they often wandered far away, yet because of the afflictions they suffered on account of disobedience, they returned again and again to a new allegiance and thus obtained the blessings it involved.

It is a remarkable fact that they never worshipped Moses as a god. This is true also of their ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Other peoples regarded the great men of their past as objects of worship and built altars to them, but of this form of idolatry the Hebrew people were never guilty. They did not even regard their ancient heroes as demi-gods and no mythology gathered around them. Their heroes were men

who lived in historic conditions clearly set forth in the Bible and sustained to-day, through archæology, by the records of other people. The idea of God, given them by Moses and the ancient fathers, was so exalted, so unapproachable, that even when they turned away from him and adopted alien gods there is no suggestion in their history that with this foreign worship they mingled the adoration of those through whom God's revelation of himself had been made known. There was, and is, an essential incompatibility between the worship of him and that of any man, however great.

We pass on now to a period covering many centuries. Its history is written in the books of Judges, Samuel, and Kings, to which may be added Chronicles and Ezra and Nehemiah. We cannot consider in detail the teaching of each or all of these books. We can only turn to the great men of this long period and seek to learn what they have taught us concerning the God of Israel. It begins with the events following the death of Joshua and ends with the return from the Babylonian captivity. During this period there were developed two distinctive kinds of religious literature. The one consists of the writings of the prophets, which will be the main subject of the present lecture; the other, to be considered in the next lecture, consists of the writings of Israel's religious poets and the sayings of her wise men.

The times of the judges we pass over with brief consideration. They may be called, as I have said, the critical period of Hebrew history. It was a time of

testing. Was the religion of Moses too high in its nature and demands for its acceptance on the part of men, and was it finally to prevail, or perish utterly from the earth? It seemed sometimes as though the latter was to be its fate. Failing to destroy, as they were commanded to do, the idolatrous and immoral worship of the Canaanites, they were exposed to the constant temptation to accept the gods and practise the iniquities of the religion of the land, a temptation to which again and again they yielded. The book of Judges records a long series of apostasies, of penalties, of repentances and cries for help, and of deliverances by Jehovah. Certain recurring phrases may be said to characterize it. These are: "The children of Israel forgot Jehovah"; "forsook Jehovah the God of their fathers"; "did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah." They evidently imply a definite and distinctive conception of him and a positive standard of what he requires. Where shall this conception and this standard be found if not in the previous revelation to the fathers and in the Sinaitic legislation? This revelation gives continuity and consistency to the historic record, and clearly indicates an essential antagonism between the gods of Canaan and the God of Israel. The difference is vastly more than that involved in the substitution of one tribal god of limited power and authority for another. The whole impression of the history, when taken in its natural sense, is that the God whom they forsook was the one, true, living, and universal God, who had made himself known in the

promise, in the deliverance from Egypt, in the voice heard at Sinai, and in the victories which gave them possession of the land. It was this invisible, all-powerful and essentially moral God, whom no outward object in earth or heaven could represent, whom no merely formal modes of worship could satisfy, who demanded faith and sincere repentance and the allegiance of the heart, and whose grace was shown in forgiveness and restoration to his favor—it was such a one whom they rejected.

The book of Judges, therefore, is not a history of merely petty wars and obscure leaders, of a struggle between the religions of unimportant tribes, but a revelation, as it claims to be, of the eternal God whose world-wide redemptive plan was being slowly wrought out and disclosed in the experiences of persons and the progress of events. The men who were leaders in this movement, however limited their vision and whatever their faults of character, were the instruments of Jehovah, and were accomplishing a work larger and more enduring than they themselves knew. In the great war song of Deborah and Barak, celebrating the defeat of Jabin and Sisera, is disclosed this consciousness of a divine mission, and a recognition of the power and goodness and righteousness of the God of Israel. It was a song of praise to him who caused Sinai to tremble at his presence, the stars of heaven to fight in their behalf, the waters of Kishon to overwhelm their enemies, and the righteous acts of whose rule in Israel the people were to rehearse. They rejoiced over the down-

fall of their foes as enemies of Jehovah, for the song ends with these words: "So let all thine enemies perish, O Jehovah, but let them that love him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might" (Judges 5 : 31). It is this conviction, that they are fighting the battles of Jehovah, which lifts them above the low level of private revenge and a merely national hatred, and invests their actions with the splendor of a patriotism as broad as the earth and inclusive of mankind. I do not say that of this they themselves were conscious. They had the limitations of their day. But they were conscious that their cause was one of religious and moral welfare for themselves and doubtless also for others. In this consciousness lay the expanding germ, as we, standing where we do and looking backward, can see, of a development whose course and completion the slow-moving centuries would alone disclose. Of that development they were a part, and they helped to carry it on through many conflicts by holding up, within their narrow sphere and during their brief lives, the torch of a divine revelation, in whose increasing light is involved the welfare of the world.

The last of the judges was Samuel. He has also been called the first of the prophets. This is not strictly true, for Moses exercised the prophetic office and Abraham was called a prophet. But what is a prophet and how did this class of men arise who were so influential in the national and religious life of Israel? Some scholars hold that in the earliest times the prophet was like the whirling dervishes of to-day, a "mad fel-

low," as the officers of Jehu called the messenger of Elisha who came to anoint him king, one whose uncontrolled emotions overcame and swayed his judgment and whose garb and actions awakened the awe of the ignorant and the contempt of the wise. From such the prophets of Israel and Judah are said to have been developed. But this view is held by those who deny any supernatural source to Hebrew prophecy and is not sustained by a study, without preconceptions, of the words and works of the prophets themselves. There is nothing saner than their teachings nor more expressive of a lofty wisdom than what they sought to accomplish. Milton in his oft-quoted lines speaks of them:

> "As men divinely taught, and better teaching
> The solid rules of civil government,
> In their majestic, unaffected style,
> Than all the oratory of Greece and Rome."
> ("Paradise Regained," book 4, lines 357–360.)

Among those who accept the supernatural origin of prophecy, the general conception seems to be that to prophesy is merely to predict. But while prediction was certainly a part of the prophet's function it was far from being the whole and not infrequently comprised but a small portion of it. The prophet, as has been aptly said, was not so much a *fore*-teller as a *forth*-teller. He was a teacher in whom, as the author of Hebrews says, God spake unto the fathers. You may deny the truth, even the possibility of the truth of

this claim, but you cannot deny that the prophets themselves made it. "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for Jehovah hath spoken" are the opening words of the prophecy of Isaiah. Amos the herdsman said to the proud priest of Bethel: "Jehovah took me from following the flock and Jehovah said unto me, Go prophesy unto my people Israel" (Amos 7 : 15). Again and again he repeats the phrase, "Thus saith Jehovah." In this Amos and Isaiah voice the insistent claims of all the prophets from Samuel to Malachi.

The scope of their teaching, therefore, is as wide as Jehovah's rule of the earth, and its truths are essentially expressive of his character. As Plato said of the philosopher, past and present and future lay open before them, and their high mission was to announce Jehovah's nature, enforce his law, condemn the people's sins and recall them to obedience and worship. This was the work of Samuel. It was a time of wide departure from the high ideals of the Mosaic legislation. The priests were immoral, at least so were the sons of Eli, and perhaps there were, as there certainly were later, prophets who testified falsely. The lofty moral character of Samuel's teaching is shown in his rebuke of Saul: "Hath Jehovah as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of Jehovah? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (I Sam. 15 : 22).

It may be objected that this refers to Saul's failure to destroy the Amalekites, and that the command to destroy them simply shows that the conception of the

divine character was but part of the barbarism of the day. But we must remember that the will of God is the supreme source of all authority, and also that a radical distinction between the religion of Israel and that of the inhabitants of Canaan was a moral distinction, and that it was because of their iniquities that they were to be destroyed. It is true that the surgery was severe, but where moral issues are involved severity is both just and kind.

In studying the prophets it is necessary to consider the times in which they lived. Without this their message cannot altogether be understood. The ordinary reader of the Bible, however, seems to pay little, if any, attention to the historic conditions. But the great teachers of Israel spoke directly to the men of their own day. They were not "housed in a dream, at distance from their kind," but were men of affairs, dealing with actual and present realities. They were, indeed, idealists; they saw visions and heard voices which it were well if our leaders of thought and action to-day could see and hear. But their visions and revelations, however much beyond the ideals and practices of the men of their own day, were never visionary and impractical. Of Isaiah it has been said that while his head was in the clouds, his feet were upon the earth. It would be better to say that his head was *above* the clouds, for he had a nobler and broader outlook than his fellow men, and the clouds did not prevent his seeing what was taking place immediately about his feet. The picture of a future world-wide peace, which

at the beginning of the second chapter he presents in language of unsurpassed eloquence and power, which was repeated by his younger contemporary Micah, and which, in that time of universal war, must have seemed to all, as it seems to many still, to be an iridescent dream, is followed by a contrasting picture of the actual idolatries and iniquities of his own day. And the truth which lay in the background of these pictures, and which gave reality to the ideal and made the actual its essential contradiction, was the truth concerning the nature and character of Jehovah. "The mountain of Jehovah's house," he says, "shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it"—and they shall say: "He will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths, for out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem." This promised day has not yet come. War with its terrors and destructions and violations of the divine will still exists. But in the multiplying voices raised against it, in the growing hatred of its evils, in the deepening horror of its desolations, in the widening movement toward a league of nations, which shall seek to fulfil the prophet's vision, we can see the brightening heralds of its dawn and the assurance of its final realization.

We are accustomed to divide the prophets into the major and the minor. This does not mean the greater and the lesser. The division is not qualitative but quantitative, determined by the length of their writ-

ings. It is the one found in our English Bibles. Another division is into the writing and non-writing prophets. The best division is based upon the succession of the times in which they prophesied. This, as regards the most of them, is indicated by the historical books and the general character of their prophecies, and also more especially by the opening words of the most of them. Although they appeared throughout nearly the entire Hebrew history, their main work was during the period of the kings. The most prominent of those times were Elijah and Elisha, and of these two Elijah is by far the more striking and impressive. He appears upon the scene with dramatic suddenness. His garb is distinctive of his person. His bearing is rugged, stern, authoritative, and of imperious power. He is a prophet of judgment rather than of tenderness and grace. He represents Jehovah's justice in the condemnation of religious apostasy and moral evil. Jezebel, the wife of Ahab, Israel's king, had brought in the Phœnician idolatry and the iniquities of the licentious worship of the Phœnician Baal, and had instituted a thorough persecution of the worshippers and prophets of Jehovah. Against this attempt to destroy Israel's religion drought and famine are announced by Elijah as Jehovah's weapons. He is forced to flee from the wrath of the queen. At the brook Cherith the ravens feed him, and later at Zarephath he is sustained by the widow's unwasting jar of meal and cruse of oil. When at last he reappears there occurs that impressive scene on Mount Carmel, told with dramatic power, when he

calls upon the people to decide between Baal and Jehovah. The priests of Baal surround their altar and cut themselves with knives and cry aloud upon their god. Elijah with biting irony mocks their ineffectual prayers. Then at his appeal the fire falls from heaven and consumes the sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones of the altar, and the water in the trench about the altar, and the people exclaim: "Jehovah, he is God, Jehovah, he is God."

Then follows the prophet's flight to Horeb, where God appears not in the wind which rent the mountains and the rocks, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire, but in the still small voice, or, as the Hebrew is more literally and poetically rendered, a sound of gentle stillness, and Elijah is bidden to return and complete his work. Once again he appears before Ahab. It is to denounce judgment upon the king and queen for the murder of Naboth and the ruthless taking of his vineyard. The prophet is not awed into silence by royal power, but has the boldness of a divine messenger.

But Elijah, however stern and relentless he may appear, is not merely a prophet of retribution. Let us not forget that to destroy evil is oftentimes the highest kind of mercy. Such men, by overcoming the destructive forces of immorality and unbelief, prepare the way for the noblest growths of righteousness and truth. Love and justice are not contradictory and mutually exclusive terms, for love without justice would be moral weakness and would defeat its own ends. In this history, therefore, of the severe prophet of wrath

it is not difficult to discern the nature and character of the God of Israel. He is no merely benevolent deity of national limitations and indifferent to the character of his people. Nor is it because the Phœnician Baal is only another god whom Israel has accepted in the place of Jehovah that Elijah contends against him. It is because Baal is an *immoral* god, whose worship involves a vile licentiousness, and who cannot command the lightning and the storm, and because Jehovah is God alone, whose hand wields nature's forces and whose law demands righteousness and love. Thus Elijah carries on the Biblical idea revealed in the work of Moses and declares it in word and act when it seems about to perish from the earth. In lurid and severe splendor it shines out in contrast with and enhanced by the religious and moral darkness of his day. Not to see this is to be blinded by a theory which reconstructs Hebrew history with violent assumptions and an arbitrary hand.

Elisha, the servant and successor of Elijah, on whom Elijah's mantle and spirit rested, while different in personality, yet carries on the work of his master. He completes it through Jehu, the ruthless soldier, who with the sword exterminates the worshippers of Baal, and by the death of Jezebel destroys the source of the religious and moral infection which threatened the nation's life. The reform, however, was only partial. The idolatrous calf-worship remained. Yet in these terrible events of war and bloodshed, when thrones were overturned and dynasties destroyed, Jehovah was

making himself known in the righteousness of his rule among the nations and preparing the way for the fuller revelation of his redemptive grace. That this was not limited by national lines some events at least suggest. It is the God of Israel who heals Naaman the Syrian, a stranger and an enemy, and punishes Gehazi, the avaricious and lying servant of the prophet, with the leprosy from which Naaman was healed.

Much has been written against the severity of these stern prophets of judgment. But to understand them and justify their acts we must place ourselves back in the times in which they lived. The ruthless defacement which Cromwell's soldiers wrought on the churches and cathedrals of England seem to some travellers of to-day the work of a spirit of barbarism, regardless of noble art and beauty. So also Paul's indignation against the sculptured marbles which filled the streets of Athens may seem uncalled for and the expression of a narrow zeal. But in both cases it was not a question of art and beauty, but of moral truth and religious worship. In judging the men of the past it is necessary, if we judge rightly, to understand their conditions and the point of view from which they acted.

The earliest of the writing prophets are Joel and Obadiah according to some scholars, who place them in the latter part of the ninth century B. C. Other scholars claim that they are among the latest. The decision is a difficult one because the proofs of date both external and internal are so slight. If they were

the earliest, then Elijah had passed away, and Obadiah, who is held to have preceded Joel, was contemporary with Elisha during that prophet's latter years. His message is the briefest of all the prophecies, but it makes the same high claims and teaches the same great truths. It opens with the words, "Thus saith the Lord Jehovah," and thrice in the following verses this statement is repeated. Jehovah's rule is not limited in time or place, but is supreme in nature and among the nations, and is moral in its character. Edom, against whom the prophecy is spoken, God has made small and despised among the nations, yet she is proud of heart, and for this, though she dwells in the clefts of the rocks and her habitation is high, she shall be brought down to the ground and her wise men are to be destroyed and her mighty men dismayed; for she has done violence to her brother Jacob in the day of his disaster and rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction. The universality of Jehovah's reign is also indicated by the prophet's conception of the day of Jehovah, "which," he said, "is near upon all the nations." Thus Obadiah strikes the constant note of a righteous retribution, yet mingled with it and modifying its sterner import, we hear also the more inspiring note of a gracious redemption, for "in Mount Zion there shall be those that escape, and it shall be holy" (verse 17). "And saviors shall come up on Mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the Kingdom shall be Jehovah's" (verse 21).

In the opening part of Joel we have that vivid and

detailed picture of the destruction caused by locusts. Like all prophets he sees in this the hand of Jehovah, for the prophets looked through and beyond what we with more limited vision call *nature* and think of simply as a system of fixed and independent physical forces. The locusts, "before whom the land is as the garden of Eden and behind whom it is a desolate wilderness" are Jehovah's army, and they come as destruction from the Almighty, yet above the darkness and desolation there shine the harbingers of a dawn of restoration, for "even now, saith Jehovah, turn ye unto me with all your heart and with fasting and with weeping and with mourning; and rend your heart and not your garments, and turn unto Jehovah your God; for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, and repenteth him of the evil" (2:12, 13). In these words Joel repeats the essential part of that wonderful declaration, which more than five centuries before God made of himself to Moses, when the great lawgiver came down out of the clouds of Sinai to find the people worshipping the golden calf. The prophet's monotheism is also distinctly stated in the words: "I am Jehovah your God, and there is none else" (2:27), and is shown in the prediction that God will gather all nations and execute judgment upon them (3:2). It is from Joel's prophecy that the Apostle Peter quotes, on the day of Pentecost, to explain the gift of tongues, and the preaching of the gospel in the languages of the nations. Far-seeing, therefore, was the prophet to whom the centuries were

but moments in the continuous and growing revelation of the God of Israel.

The earliest of the writing prophets of the eighth century B. C. was Amos. He had not been born or bred, as he tells us, to the prophetic office. He was a herdsman and a dresser of sycamore-trees, a native of Judah, but Jehovah took him from following the flock and said unto him, "Go prophesy unto my people Israel," that is, unto the northern kingdom (7 : 14, 15). Obeying the divine command he goes to Bethel, a principal centre of religious devotion, where one of the golden calves was placed, under which form Jehovah was idolatrously worshipped, and, standing beside the altar, clothed, as we may believe, in his herdsman's garb, utters his prediction of woe and condemnation. It stirs the anger of Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, as the word of a prophet of Jehovah was wont to do of those whose minds were not open to the message; for the prophets were no respecters of place or persons, and denounced priests and kings alike, if these upheld false worships and were violators of the divine law.

Amos is one of the most eloquent of the Hebrew prophets. Though of lowly station, his knowledge of the conditions of his day both among his own and other peoples is accurate and extensive. His language is pure and noble. He knows the national history and uses its great events to enforce his teaching. His conception of Jehovah is the same as that of the inspired teachers who had been before him, and is expressed in terms of loftiest poetic beauty and power. There can-

not be the slightest doubt of his conviction that he is Jehovah's prophet. "Thus saith Jehovah" and its equivalents occur more than forty times in his comparatively brief prophecy. Three striking passages set forth his conception of the divine nature and character. Calling upon Israel to seek their God and they shall live, Amos tells them that it is "He that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind, and declareth unto man what is his thought: that maketh the morning darkness, and treadeth upon the high places of the earth—Jehovah is his name" (4:13). And again: "Seek him that maketh Pleiades and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night; that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth (Jehovah is his name) and bringeth sudden destruction upon the strong, so that destruction cometh upon the fortress" (5:8, 9). And still again: "For behold the Lord Jehovah of hosts—is he that toucheth the land and it melteth—he that buildeth his chambers in the heavens, and hath founded his vault upon the earth—Jehovah is his name" (9:5, 6).

Is there anywhere in all religious literature a conception of the divine nature more exalted and impressive? Jehovah reigns in the natural and the moral worlds, omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, and yet is not too great, nay, because he is so great, regards the least infraction of his law. Physical science, with its high insistence on the universality and supremacy of law goes not beyond the prophet, yet with its exaltation of

mere natural force falls far below him, for the prophet's conception is personal, and personality is the real and final explanation of the world. Righteousness is its supreme law, and righteousness is its end and consummation. This is the message which the prophet had learned as he guarded his herds beneath the stars of the Judean skies, and this is the message which he brings.

But the lofty monotheism of Amos, while also ethical, is not expressed in merely glittering moral generalities. His code is concerned with the plainest and most ordinary sins, and enforces the plainest, most ordinary duties. He begins with a series of denunciations of the peoples surrounding Israel, expressed in a constantly recurring formula, which like a repeated phrase or motif in music, gives increasing impressiveness to the thought. But Israel and Judah have also sinned and are included in the condemnation. Not because they are Jehovah's people can they escape, but just because they are must punishment fall also upon them. "You only," Jehovah says, "have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will visit upon you all your iniquities" (3:2). "For you have rejected my law, you have not kept my statutes, your lies [that is, your false gods] have caused you to err, you have forgotten my mercies, when I led you out of Egypt, and destroyed before you the inhabitants of this land; and you have said to my prophets, 'prophesy not'" (chap. 2). "For they hate him that reproveth in the gate, and abhor him that speaketh uprightly" (5:10). This is not the

message of a partial god, who exists only to secure the welfare of a special people, but of one whose authority and power are universal, and to whom the earth belongs.

It is not, however, merely national sins that merit the prophet's stern reproof. In passages of vivid and minute description he condemns the luxuries and oppressions of the rich and powerful, they that "lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock and the calves out of the midst of the stall—that drink wine in bowls and anoint themselves with the chief oils, but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph" (6:4–6). Those also are denounced that "would swallow up the needy, and cause the poor of the land to fail, saying, When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell grain? and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small and the shekel great [that is, giving small measure for a great price], and dealing falsely with balances of deceit; that we may buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes, and sell the refuse of the wheat?" (8:4–6). This sounds very much as if Amos were living in our day and speaking to us of present evils. And this is, indeed, the peculiar greatness of these Old Testament prophets that while they speak directly to the men of their own time they are speaking also to the men of all time. For, as the mouthpieces of Jehovah the eternal God, they deal with necessary and eternal moral truths, and regard human conduct solely in their blaz-

ing and burning light. The lapse of time makes no change in the constitutive elements of moral law. Thirty centuries have not modified the Decalogue in the least degree, nor lowered the ethical standards of the prophets. They are as enduring as are the physical laws, which govern the smallest atom and the largest world, and the consequences of their violation are as inevitable as are the consequences of the violation of these. For, aside from human enactments, all law, physical and moral, in the last analysis, is the expression of the abiding will of God. And that will plans and purposes throughout the slow-evolving years the establishment at last of the reign of righteousness and truth. This was the vision of Amos. He saw clearly, as all the prophets did, the moral and religious darkness about him, but he saw also beyond earth's shadow the larger and enduring light, the light (to change Wordsworth's lines by one word):

> "That never was on sea or land,
> The consecration and the *prophet's* dream."

Therefore, in the conclusion of his prophecy of judgment and woe, he reminds us of the enduring promise, and presents a vivid picture of its fulfilment in the days that are to come. The voice, therefore, which spoke through Amos is the same divine voice which spoke through Abraham and Moses and all the prophets which preceded Amos, and will continue to speak until prophecy, which is in part, shall be done away with and

it rises to its highest and final utterance in the word and work of the eternal Son.

The next in the chronological succession of the prophets is Hosea, a younger contemporary of Amos. He appears to have been a native of the northern kingdom, and to have given his message there. The first three chapters contain an account of his personal experience with an unfaithful wife. Is this account to be taken as literal or allegorical? The question has divided scholars, some interpreting in one way, some in the other. The decision, however, does not especially concern us, for it does not affect the prophet's teaching as to Jehovah. In either case his conception of the divine nature and character remains the same, although if arising out of actual experience its expression would have a force and poignancy not otherwise to be attained.

Hosea is, as are all the others, a prophet of judgment, but he is also pre-eminently the prophet of love. Clear in his intellectual conception of Jehovah, he is at the same time intensely emotional. He states unsparingly the sins of the people and the inevitable results, but there is a tone of profound sorrow; his heart is deeply moved by the awful nature of their transgressions and the consequences these involve. Israel is the faithless wife of whom Jehovah is the husband. He has forgiven her apostasy, but she returns to it again. Jehovah's love, therefore, is redemptive in its nature. It would restore and knit anew the broken relationship, and do this by love's essential power. Righteousness

and mercy, therefore, are fundamental notes in Hosea's conception of Jehovah. "I will betroth thee unto me," Jehovah says to the apostate nation, "in righteousness and in justice and in lovingkindness and in mercies" (2 : 19). And again: "I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them that were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God" (2 : 23), and yet again: "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely; for mine anger is turned away from him" (14 : 4).

But this is no new revelation. Hosea, as was Amos, is acquainted with the history of his people. He knows the story of Jacob (12 : 3, 4), the deliverance from Egypt (11 : 1; 12 : 9; 13 : 4), the wandering in the wilderness (13 : 5), the sin at Baal-peor (9 : 10). And he refers to these events in that casual way that indicates them to have been matters of common knowledge. He also uses them with striking effect to enforce his moral and religious lessons.

Hosea's conception of the character of God is also clearly indicated by his attitude toward a merely formal worship, as if this could take the place of an upright life. Not ritual, however elaborate and impressive, but moral obedience is what Jehovah demands. "For I desire goodness and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings" (6 : 6). In this Hosea announces a truth characteristic of all the prophets. The fatally persistent feeling, not of the Hebrews alone but of mankind, seems, however, to be that outward observances can atone for inward sins. This is to de-

grade the spiritual nature of religion, to minister narcotics to conscience, and to conceive of God as indifferent to his supreme demands.

Among the prophets of the eighth century B. C. and, indeed, among all prophets, Isaiah is the greatest, not, however, in the character of his message, but in native genius and poetic power. For though God spoke in the prophets he did not suppress their distinctive personal qualities. The divine truth took upon itself the varied forms and colors of human speech and human individuality. Thus Amos in his illustrations gives evidence of his herdsman's life and rustic experiences, and Isaiah shows familiarity with a royal court and the literary culture of his day.

His prophecies have been subjected to the customary critical analysis and have been divided into several parts, ascribed to several assumed authors. Beginning with the natural and clearly indicated leading division into two parts, the first thirty-nine chapters were once assigned to the historical Isaiah, and the rest to some unknown author, variously designated, of the close of the captivity and the restoration. But the determining of authorship has not stopped here. There are now several more authors assumed to have written the first part. The more moderate divisive critics allow only one-third of the entire book, counting by chapters, to have been written by the genuine Isaiah, while the more radical, counting by verses, leave to him a trifle more than one-fifth. There are still scholars, however, of high standing who accept the whole book as having

been written by Isaiah, the son of Amoz, and we may leave this conflict of opinion to be settled, as time will doubtless settle it, to those whose greatest interest is in such formal studies and turn to consider the more important question as to what the book teaches concerning God.

That the author, or authors, if such there were, was a pronounced monotheist, no one doubts. The deities of the world outside of Israel are held to be nonentities, or no-beings; Israel's God alone exists. In words of biting irony Isaiah describes the idols as senseless and devoid of power, formed of wood and silver and gold (44 : 9–17). Man "heweth him down cedars, and taketh the holm-tree and the oak," with part he kindleth a fire and warmeth himself, and baketh bread, and with part he maketh a god. But Jehovah saith: "To whom will ye liken me and make me equal" (46 : 5)— "the God that created the heavens, that formed the earth, that established it and created it not a waste, that formed it to be inhabited? I am Jehovah and there is none else" (45 : 18). And again, contrasting himself with graven images, he saith: "Have ye not known, have ye not heard, hath it not been told you from the beginning, have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is he that sitteth above the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in; that bringeth princes to nothing; that maketh the judges of the earth as vanity" (40 : 21–23). In such passages of

unsurpassed eloquence, Isaiah declares the majestic greatness and glory of Israel's God, whose sole existence is the ultimate ground of the prophet's faith.

But equally ultimate and elemental is his conception of Jehovah's character. He is the holy God. This conviction is definitely expressed in the sixth chapter, which gives an account of the prophet's call. Isaiah is worshipping in the temple and in a vision "saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up. Above him stood the seraphim . . . and one cried unto another and said, Holy, Holy, Holy is Jehovah of hosts, and the fulness of the whole earth is his glory." The vision awakens in the prophet the sense of sin. "Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips." But his lips are cleansed by a live coal from off the altar, and his sin forgiven. Then his apparently hopeless mission is given him to a people with ears that will not hear, and eyes that will not see, and whose heart will be hardened by the message which should soften and save.

The prophecies, spoken throughout a ministry of forty years, are arranged not in the time order of their deliverance, but in groups determined by a common theme. In the first chapter, which is evidently a general introduction to the entire book, appear the leading conceptions of the prophet. The breadth and sublimity of his outlook are seen in those whom he calls upon to listen. It is not merely Judah and Jerusalem, but the vaster audience of earth and heaven. "Hear, O heav-

ens, and give ear, O earth, for Jehovah hath spoken." Then follows the denunciation of the sin of the people. They are rebellious children, Jehovah has nourished and brought them up, but they have forsaken him and have despised the Holy One of Israel. It is the old story, old as the nation's life, and told again and again throughout its historic career. Chosen of God for knowledge and service, for righteousness and truth, they have turned aside to falsehood and transgression, and the irrevocable law of retribution has brought destruction and woe, and a foreign nation is desolating their country, burning their cities, devouring their land. Jerusalem is besieged and the people are appealing to Jehovah for help. They are multiplying the sacrifices, thronging the sacred courts of the temple, increasing the prayers, but these accomplish nothing. Jehovah delights not in burnt offerings or the blood of bullocks or of lambs, oblations are vain, incense is an abomination. New moons and appointed feasts his soul hateth, and he will not hear their prayers. It is the same essential lesson that Amos and all the prophets taught. Ritual will not take the place of righteousness. The hands lifted in supplication are full of blood. Jehovah cannot accept iniquity and the solemn meeting. "Wash you," he says, "make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to do evil, learn to do well, seek justice, relieve the oppressed, give judgment for the fatherless, plead for the widow." In all this the character of Jehovah is expressed with stern decisiveness, clearness, and power, and shining

through the denunciation of sin is also seen the element of mercy as shown in his care for those who are helpless against the oppressions of the powerful and rich.

The fifth chapter contains an appalling litany of woes. "Woe to them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no room," words which are an evident indication that the evils attendant upon trusts and combinations are not new in our day. "Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning that they may follow strong drink, that tarry late into the night until wine inflame them." "Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of falsehood, and sin as it were with a cart-rope." "Woe unto them that call evil good and good evil, that put darkness for light and light for darkness." "Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes and prudent in their own sight." "Woe unto them that justify the wicked for a bribe and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him." "Therefore Sheol hath enlarged its desire and opened its mouth without measure, and their glory and their multitude and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth among them descend into it." Could the moral character of Jehovah be more impressively declared? When, in their religions, other nations ignored the essential antagonism between righteousness and unrighteousness, between truth and falsehood, and ascribed to their deities, as did the Greeks, the immoralities of man, the prophets of the Old Testament lifted their conception of Jehovah far above this low level of debasement, and expressed it in terms which will forever awaken the

deepest elements in our moral consciousness, and strengthen and sustain our noblest aspirations and aims. No progressive development of our thought of God will ever surpass their teaching or leave its essential contents among the outworn and rejected beliefs of the world.

But we have not time, nor is it necessary, to quote further passages which express Isaiah's majestic conception of Jehovah. He is, as he has been often called, the evangelical prophet. He proclaims with a larger vision and an increasing emphasis the distinctive Biblical idea of redemption. And this idea takes, in his teaching, a more personal form. The promised blessing is to be realized in a clearly defined personal Messiah. Moses had spoken of a prophet like unto himself whom God was to raise up (Deut. 18:15–18), but Isaiah varies and enlarges this prediction. He beholds a king who shall reign in righteousness (32:1); he speaks of a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, upon whom the spirit of Jehovah shall rest (11:1, 2); and in his prophecy is that more marvellous prediction, which Handel has combined with music of unsurpassed sublimity: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (9:6).

In the fifty-third chapter this personal Redeemer is set forth as accomplishing his work through suffering. He is the divine sacrifice for the world's sin and so for

the world's redemption. "He was wounded for our transgressions . . . and by his stripes we are healed." Thus across the intervening space of seven centuries Isaiah saw the cross and its dying victim lifted up upon the mount of Calvary. This clear vision of a personal Messiah, other and later prophets were to see. Micah, the younger contemporary of Isaiah, uttered the prediction which by the priests and scribes was quoted to Herod: "But thou, Beth-lehem Ephrathah, . . . out of thee shall one come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from old, from everlasting" (5:2).

I have dwelt thus at length upon the prophets of the eighth century B. C. because in them is disclosed in greater fulness than at any time between them and the earlier Mosaic age and the later Christian era the nature and character of God. They repeat and enlarge and enforce the ideas of that earlier age, and contain all that is essential in the prophets who followed them. Nahum, Zephaniah, and Habakkuk applied these conceptions to the conditions and peoples of their day; Jeremiah, whose work continued throughout the closing years of Judah's national life, who while distinctly foretelling the final fall, a fall determined by Judah's sins and Jehovah's righteousness, yet foretold, also, above and beyond the darkness and desolation of the Babylonian captivity, the brightness of a better day, when Jehovah would establish a new covenant, when he would write his law upon the heart, when all should know him from the least unto the greatest, and when

he would forgive iniquity and remember sin no more (31 : 33).

This, also, is the burden of Ezekiel, the prophet of the exile, who while still a prophet of judgment as the others were, and thus in flaming language emphasizing the righteousness of Jehovah and the supremacy of the moral law, yet predicts, as they also did, the future restoration. It is in his book that we find the ever-memorable words: "As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live" (33 : 11). Once more let me point out that such a statement alone makes impossible the opinion that the God of the Old Testament is merely a capricious God of severity and retribution.

It has been said that the prophets of Israel and Judah are a *terra incognita*, an unknown land, a statement far too true of even many believers in the Bible. They are read with reference merely to the narrow experiences of individuals and not with reference to the larger interests of mankind. But among the wise men of the past there are no greater teachers. They state with unequalled clearness and force those elemental truths which should determine the thought and guide the action of both individuals and nations. Especially do they teach with an eloquence and power, which the religious literature of no other ancient people has approached, that deepest and most universal of all truths, the nature and character of God. It has become a disputed question in these latter days whether this

truth, namely, that there is but one God, and that his supreme law is moral, originated with the prophets of the eighth century B. C. and arose from their own reflection. Speculation cannot settle it, nor arbitrary affirmation offer a solution. But the answer of the Bible is positive and clear. Unless we radically change the history so as to make it quite different from what the Bible gives, ethical monotheism had its beginnings in a far-distant past. It was no new belief when Amos prophesied beside the altar at Bethel, and Isaiah condemned the plans and purposes of Judea's priests and king. Their insistent claim, as we have seen, is that they are the mouthpieces of Jehovah. It is no less their insistent claim that they are voices in a continuous revelation. They constantly appeal to a divinely guided historic past, in the events of which Jehovah has disclosed himself. There is not the slightest shred of evidence that they are conscious of a new truth concerning him. There is no proof that they know that they are lifting the conception of a merely tribal God into the conception of one who is limitless in power, unapproachable in holiness, merciful and gracious in plan and purpose. They look upon themselves not as *innovators* but as *reformers*. Their mission is to recall the people to the worship and service of the God of the fathers, the God of the promise, who had revealed himself to Abraham (Isaiah 29 : 22) (Micah 7 : 20), who had delivered them from Egypt (Micah 6 : 4) (Amos 2 : 10), who had declared his law at Sinai, who had sent his servants, the prophets, daily rising up and

sending them (Amos 2 : 11; also Jer. 7 : 25). The contention, therefore, that ethical monotheism, as it is called, began with them, has no basis in fact and is quite contrary to the evident consciousness of the prophets themselves.

It were well if the Christian church, and especially its ministry, should, with a more thorough study and deeper reverence, turn back to these great prophetic teachers of the past. They are the ones to whom our Lord so frequently refers as heralds of himself, and on them and the fulfilment of their predictions the apostles built their message of salvation. In times when men were wandering in the darkness of religious apostasy and moral degradation, they saw far off the light, "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." To attain the height and breadth of their vision, to be quickened by their faith and spirit, is to possess a power which shall make the pulpit once more a place where men shall speak with authority, and whose words shall have power to recreate the world.

V

THE BIBLICAL IDEA OF GOD

IN THE PSALMS, JOB, AND ECCLESIASTES

THE Jews divided the Old Testament into the law, the prophets, and the hagiographa, or sacred writings. This division is found in the New Testament (Luke 24:44). The last portion was sometimes called the Psalms, because they are the principal part of it. The law comprised the Pentateuch or first five books, called the books of Moses, because their authorship was ascribed to him. The prophets included not only those whom we especially designate as such, but also Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings. We now speak of these as historical books, but the Jews called them the former prophets, doubtless because they were written by prophetic men and from a prophetic point of view; that is, tracing in the recorded events the unfolding process of a divine revelation.

The sacred writings comprised the Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Esther, Daniel, Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah, a varied group, part historical and part poetic, and were the last received into the sacred canon.

It is not necessary, nor is it possible in these lectures, to treat of all these writings, nor to arrange them all in chronological order. Some cannot with any assurance be located in time; and concerning the dates of

most, if not of all, there is much disputing among scholars. The most radical view is that they belong, mainly at least, to the period during and following the exile, while conservative scholars, although not accepting in every case the traditional authorship, as stated in the titles of the Psalms, yet are unwilling to reject altogether a tradition that has come down from a remote past and against which no external, or manuscript, authority has thus far been adduced. That there are Psalms, such as the 102d and 137th, which belong to the time of the exile is clearly evident from their contents, but that there are none in which David poured out his heart in prayer and praise is difficult to believe. To ascribe all these religious lyrics to the times during or after the exile seems to me very much like ascribing the Elizabethan drama to the more artificial times of Queen Anne.

However, as I have already said, into these critical discussions we do not specifically enter. Our interest is in the more essential and important question as to what these great religious poems teach concerning God, not as to when and by whom they were written. Questions of chronology are sometimes of decisive importance; for instance, questions regarding the records of historic persons and events. But in our present quest their importance is not so great. In general, we may consider the Biblical conception of God without particular consideration of the age and authorship of the books in which it is expressed. Its development may on the whole be traced without having regard to

the distinctly successive stages of every part of that development. Thus, the Psalms of David preceded the writings of the prophets, but we shall find in them the same essential religious ideas which we have found in the prophets, as also in the earlier periods we have considered. They are, however, presented, more personally, more vividly, and with greater variety of form and emphasis. They are not theological treatises presenting truth or speculation in philosophic statement, but intensely vital expressions of personal experience. Indeed, the Bible is not a system of theology, neither as a whole nor in any of its parts, although it has been treated as if it were. Had it been it would never have captured and held the interest of men. Its human authors, especially the authors of the Psalms, were not cloistered souls, dwelling apart from human relationships and sympathies, but men of God and of this actual world, who felt God's presence and power, and were familiar with his ways not only in the sanctuary but among the nations and in the homes and marts of men. It is this characteristic which gives to the Psalms, as to all the books of the Bible, a lasting interest and makes them appeal not merely to the questioning intellect but also to the yearning heart of universal man.

The main if not the exclusive theme of the Psalms is the character and ways of God. They are lyric songs of devotion, the answer, as has been said, of the human heart to the revelation which God has made of himself to man. There is nothing just like them, nor equal to

them, in all religious literature. There are, indeed, Babylonian and Egyptian psalms which occasionally contain noble thoughts and lofty aspirations. But these are like grains of wheat in masses of chaff and refuse. They are debased by the polytheism and low conceptions of their authors, and are mingled with magical incantations and an agonizing sense of merely ritualistic transgressions. But the Hebrew Psalms rest on the abiding conviction of the real existence of the one living and true God, the God of the promise, and they voice the deepest emotions of moral penitence and joy, of moral worship and adoration, of moral faith and hope, of moral assurance and aspiration. The hymns, therefore, sung in Babylonian and Egyptian temples cannot be compared in thought and feeling, in majestic greatness and impassioned fervor, with the hymns sung in the temple at Jerusalem. No other religious poetry ever has been or could be made the devotional expression of a divine worship in which all races, all classes, all conditions can unite. The reason for this lies in the conceptions, or rather the convictions, which these psalmists held concerning God. No other beliefs could have awakened, nor can awaken, within the human heart such profound and melodious response. Destroy these beliefs and the answering strings of praise are forever broken. Philosophic agnosticism has never written a song of adoring wonder to the dark void which to it obscures the glory and the grace of Israel's God. Impersonal and resistless force, however vast in extent and power, may awaken awe,

but it is awe without trust and love, a terror and not a joy. But it is to the one living and personal God that the Hebrew psalmists utter their songs of praise. He is the sole and supreme object of worship whose attributes are not mere subjective conceptions of the human mind but objective realities, beyond and behind, and yet made manifest in, the forces and forms of earth and heaven, in historic events and in the actual experiences of living men.

Thus the psalmists ascribe personality to God and their conception is intensely spiritual. No outward and visible form can body him forth. Idolatry is abhorrent to them. The second commandment, that against graven images, had completely dominated their thought of the divine nature. In the 115th Psalm, in terms of irony which remind us of Isaiah, there is a description of the idols of the nations.

> "They are silver and gold, the work of men's hands.
> They have mouths, but they speak not;
> Eyes have they, but they see not;
> They have ears, but they hear not;
> Noses have they, but they smell not;
> They have hands, but they handle not;
> Feet have they, but they walk not;
> Neither speak they through their throat.
> They that make them shall be like unto them,
> Yea, every one that trusteth in them."

But the God of Israel is not like these, a senseless image.

"He that planted the ear, shall he not hear?
He that formed the eye, shall he not see?" (Psalm 94 : 9).

"His footsteps are on the deep" (Psalm 77 : 19).

"His voice is upon the waters, and in the thunder, a voice of power and full of majesty, breaking the cedars of Lebanon, cleaving the flames of fire, and causing the wilderness to shake" (Psalm 29).

"The heavens declare the glory of God,
And the firmament showeth his handiwork,
Day unto day uttereth speech,
And night unto night showeth knowledge" (Psalm 19 : 1, 2).

Yet this vast expanse, radiant with sun and star, this constant interchange of light and darkness, are silent, inarticulate expressions of Jehovah's greatness. As the Revised Version more accurately translates it:

"There is no speech nor language,
Their voice is not heard."

Thus the Hebrew poet celebrated not merely the impressive sounds but the more impressive silences of nature. It was with the inward eye and ear that he regarded it. To him nature was in a certain real sense but another name for God, but not in the sense of pantheism. God is immanent in nature and yet transcendent. Instead of losing God in nature and regarding it as the ultimate reality, nature to the psalmists is not a cause or complexity of causes, but an effect, or series of effects, the marvellous and intelligible expression of the creative action of a divine intelligence

and will. Among all the manifold forms and forces of the world there is a central personal power. Nature finds its unity in the living God. Thus with an unfaltering faith the Hebrew religious poets affirm that interpretation of the material world which the broadest scientific observation and the profoundest philosophic thought of to-day confirm.

This fundamental conception is eloquently expressed in the 104th Psalm. The unknown author (for the Psalm is anonymous) presents no elaborate argument for God's existence, which only the learned few could grasp and understand, but appeals directly to the religious consciousness, and in vivid poetic terms enumerates those visible and tangible objects that are familiar to all, and yet so familiar that to the ordinary mind and to the mind entangled in false preconceptions and fallacious reasonings their deeper meaning is often obscured, but to the psalmist are evidences of Jehovah's presence, and awaken in him emotions of awe and trust and worship. The light is Jehovah's garment, clouds his chariot, winds his messengers, flames of fire his ministers. He laid the foundations of the earth that it should not be moved forever, he covered it with the deep as with a vesture. At his command the mountains rose, the valleys sank down. He set a bound for the waters and they turn not again to cover the earth. He sendeth forth springs into the valleys where the wild asses quench their thirst. By them the birds of the heavens have their habitations. He causeth grass to grow for the cattle and herb for

the service of man. He hath planted the cedars of Lebanon. He openeth his hand and satisfieth with good every living thing. Thus contemplating the earth and its inhabitants the psalmist exclaims:

"O Jehovah, how manifold are thy works!
In wisdom hast thou made them all. The earth is full of thy riches."

There are also other psalms in which this devout vision of God in nature is eloquently expressed, such as the 8th and 18th, the 33d, the 65th, and still others in brief passages too numerous to mention. In these lyric songs of praise, to use once more the language of an eminent minister of the gospel, the Lord of the garden is not hidden by the garden of the Lord. If those students of nature, whose work is to trace the relationship and order of what are called secondary causes, could stand with these Hebrew poets on their lofty height of vision and see with inward and unsealed eye the primal cause revealed in the ever-changing panorama of earth and sky, there would be less atheism and agnosticism taught in our schools and colleges to-day, and more of those deeper truths which are the formative and sustaining forces in developing moral character and ennobling human life.

But not in nature only do the Hebrew psalmists see the work of the God they worship. The history of man in all its involved and oftentimes perplexing movements is to them the unfolding by him of an eternal plan. They are sometimes troubled by its slow

development, they cannot always understand the immediate trend of its events; God at times seems to hide himself and is apparently indifferent to the turmoil and evil of the world. Thus in the 10th Psalm the author cries out in his distress:

> "Why standest thou afar off, O Jehovah?
> Why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble?"
>
> "Wherefore doth the wicked contemn God,
> And say in his heart, Thou wilt not require it?"
>
> "All his thoughts are, There is no God."

We, also, who live in times of larger light and fuller revelation, find, like the psalmist, our belief in God's guidance of the world to be sometimes shaken. The late war which involved so many nations in its agonies and horror led not a few to question that guidance. But wars which desolate wide realms and destroy ancient civilizations are no new and strange experience. Again and again the earth has been drenched with the blood of untold millions. Again and again the cry of humanity has gone up to heaven: How long, O Lord, how long?

But this questioning doubt of the psalmist is a momentary mood. It disappears before the deeper and more abiding conviction that "Jehovah reigneth, therefore let the world rejoice." The divine hand determines the direction of events and assures their triumphant issue. The psalmists, therefore, while intensely national, do not limit God's interest and control to their

own people. The historical psalms, such as the 105th and 106th, speak of the covenant with Abraham and recount the glories of the Mosaic age; and this patriotic feeling was natural and right, for to the chosen people the promises had been made. Yet, just as to Abraham even, Jehovah was "judge of all the earth," so also to the psalmists he is "King over all the earth" (47 : 2), "whose throne is established of old" (93 : 2), and this universal rule of Jehovah is not merely righteous and retributive, but gracious and redemptive, which clearly shows that the full significance of the promise to the great patriarch had not been obscured by the intervening years, but remained as a far-flashing beacon-light to guide and sustain the faith and hope of Israel's inspired teachers. The days will come, it is said, when "the princes of the peoples are gathered together to be the people of the God of Abraham" (47 : 9), when "all Kings shall fall down before him, all nations shall serve him" (72 : 11), "when the peoples are gathered together and the Kingdoms to serve Jehovah" (102 : 22). Such expressions are not frequent, but they are not the less significant of an enduring conviction that human history is the realization of a divine purpose of redemption formed in the counsels of eternity, and comprehending every age and all mankind.

We have already found this sublime conviction in the prophets, lighting up the darker clouds of condemnation with which their writings abound, in the predictions of the Messiah and of a final universal peace such as Micah and Isaiah foretold; and it will broaden and

brighten with the years that are to come, until it reaches its fulfilment in the advent of the Christ.

The essential character of this divine purpose and plan is also shown in the book of Psalms. It is altogether moral, and is to work out the moral regeneration of the human race. Its morality, moreover, as in the Decalogue, is rooted in religion, and the religion is that in which Jehovah is the one object of worship.

This recognition and assertion of a moral order, established and sustained by Jehovah, vaster than the physical order and inclusive of it, is found with especial emphasis in the book of Psalms. Open the book anywhere and you will find it affirmed or implied. The first Psalm begins with the words:

"Blessed is the man who walketh not in the counsel of the wicked,
Nor standeth in the way of sinners,
Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers,
But his delight is in the law of Jehovah,
And in his law doth he meditate day and night."

And the Psalm closes with the words:

"For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous,
But the way of the wicked shall perish."

The 37th Psalm is addressed to those who fail to see this righteous rule and are troubled because evil is so prevalent and apparently predominant.

"Fret not thyself because of evil doers,
Neither be thou envious against them that work unrighteousness,

For they shall soon be cut down like the grass,
And wither as the green herb."

"For Jehovah loveth justice,
And forsaketh not his saints,
They are preserved forever,
But the seed of the wicked shall be cut off."

"Clouds and darkness are round about him," but "righteousness and justice are the foundations of his throne" (97 : 2).

This even-handed moral order, whose source and sustaining power, according to the Bible, are in God alone, some to-day would dissociate altogether from belief in him. They would base moral obedience on the vague conceptions of philosophy, or on physical science, or on the recognition of the working in human history of an invariable though impersonal law, or on the mere sense of obligation which conscience gives. But such sources, which to some extent are effective, furnish no sufficient motive power against the evil appetites and passions of mankind; nor can they lift men to the serene heights of that nobler morality whose inmost nature is unselfishness, and whose law is the golden rule. This is always and everywhere the experience of the world. Among the lowest tribes of savages obedience to their limited and imperfect moral laws is secured by the sanctions of their religions, however inadequate their religious conceptions and worship may be; and it is a matter of simple observation that wherever the God of the Bible is known and sincerely believed in, there so-

cial evils are overcome and righteousness and truth prevail.

But it is not merely the strict and impartial justice of Jehovah that psalmists teach. Were this the sole idea of a moral God, we might well exclaim with the author of the 130th Psalm:

> "If thou, Jehovah, shouldst mark iniquities,
> O Lord, who could stand?"

But he adds immediately:

"There is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared."

Shakespeare, who evidently knew his Bible, has felt the force and beauty of this great truth, and restated it in his own inimitable way. To Shylock Portia says that mercy

> "Is an attribute to God himself.
> And earthly power doth then show likest God's
> When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,
> Though justice be thy plea, consider this,
> That, in the course of justice, none of us
> Should see salvation; we do pray for mercy;
> And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
> The deeds of mercy."

It is not in its records of war and conquest that the deepest convictions of a people are expressed, but in its literature, its poetry, especially in its songs of devotion. Let all the creeds that were ever formed, all the doctrinal treatises that were ever written, all the sermons that were ever preached perish utterly, yet if the hymns sung in the Christian church remain you

shall find enshrined in them the essential truths of our faith. In rhythmic form they voice our religious convictions and sustain our religious life. In the Psalms, therefore, we shall find the best and highest expression in the Old Testament of Israel's thought of God. The Hebrew word which in the old version is sometimes translated mercy and sometimes loving-kindness is in the new American Revision always, with but three exceptions, translated loving-kindness, and is found one hundred and thirteen times in the Psalms, as also frequently elsewhere. In the 51st Psalm, which is said to be David's penitential hymn and plea for forgiveness after his great sin, it is to the loving-kindness and tender mercies of God that he appeals, and the 32d Psalm begins with the words:

"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven,
Whose sin is covered.
Blessed is the man unto whom Jehovah imputeth not iniquity,
And in whose spirit there is no guile."

The 103d Psalm is a song of joy and blessing to the God

"Who forgiveth all thine iniquities;
Who healeth all thy diseases;
Who redeemeth thy life from destruction,
Who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies."

"Jehovah is merciful and gracious,
Slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness."

"For as the heavens are high above the earth,
So great is his lovingkindness toward them that fear him."

Can any one read such words and still say that Israel's God was cruel and capricious? Cruelty and caprice take no account of moral character or moral needs, nor of moral ends in the government of the world. They express a passion which seeks only to gratify itself. But grace, while clearly recognizing the fact and guilt of sin, and never disregarding the claims of justice, yet seeks to reclaim the transgressor and restore to him the righteousness he has lost. This essential harmony of these contrasted but not conflicting attributes of God is affirmed in the 85th Psalm:

> "Mercy and truth are met together.
> Righteousness and peace have kissed each other."

But it is the attitude of loving-kindness which touches most deeply the hearts of these Hebrew poets, and awakens in them the thanksgiving uttered in their songs of praise. Hence again and again we find such statements as:

"The earth, O Jehovah, is full of thy lovingkindness" (119:64).

> "Oh praise Jehovah all ye nations;
> Laud him all ye peoples.
> For his lovingkindness is great toward us;
> And the truth of Jehovah endureth forever" (117).

Again:

"All the paths of Jehovah are lovingkindness and truth
Unto such as keep his covenant and testimonies" (25:10).

The 118th Psalm opens with the words:

> "Oh give thanks unto Jehovah, for he is good,
> For his lovingkindness endureth forever."

This last line is four times repeated in the first four verses, and the Psalm closes with the verse with which it began.

The 107th Psalm recounts the troubles through which men pass, troubles arising from adversaries, from exile, from hunger and thirst, from bonds and afflictions, from nearness to the gates of death, from storms upon the sea, from the evils of wickedness and oppression, yet they are called upon to

> "Give thanks unto Jehovah, for he is good,
> For his lovingkindness endureth forever."
>
> "He delivered them out of their distresses,
> He led them also by a straight way."

Psalm 136, which recounts the signal events of the deliverance from Egypt, consists of twenty-six verses, each verse referring to a special event, and ending with the phrase,

> "For his lovingkindness endureth forever,"

like a continuously recurring musical refrain, which only escapes monotony because of the greatness of its thought and its fitness to meet the moral needs of men.

Thus the Psalms abundantly express the two fundamental elements of justice and mercy in the Biblical

idea of God. They express also other elements which, combined with these, make up the complete conception of his nature. Limitless power is ascribed to him. This is involved in the conception of him as the creator of earth and heaven, and as controlling all events. It is also definitely stated in such passages as:

"God hath spoken once.
Twice have I heard this,
That power belongeth unto God" (62 : 11).

"Be thou exalted, O Jehovah, in thy strength,
So will we sing and praise thy power" (21 : 13).

"Who by thy strength setteth fast the mountains,
Being girded about with might" (65 : 6).

"He ruleth by his might forever" (66 : 7).

The 139th Psalm celebrates the omnipresence and omniscience of God, not as an abstract metaphysical truth, but as a personal and vital experience, and in terms which touch the heart and awaken awe, and quicken the love of righteousness and truth.

"O Jehovah, thou hast searched me and known me.
Thou knowest my downsitting and my uprising:
Thou understandest my thought afar off.
Thou searchest out my path and my lying down,
And art acquainted with all my ways.
For there is not a word in my tongue,
But lo, O Jehovah, thou knowest it altogether.
Thou hast beset me behind and before
And laid thy hand upon me.
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,
It is high, I cannot attain unto it.
Whither shall I go from thy spirit?

Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?
If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there:
If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, thou art there.
If I take the wings of the morning,
And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
Even there shall thy hand lead me,
And thy right hand shall hold me.
If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me,
Then the night shall be light about me,
Even the darkness hideth not from thee,
But the night shineth as the day;
The darkness and the light are both alike to thee."

But time fails us to set forth adequately the fulness and richness of these Hebrew songs of devotion, and the many and varied forms of personal experience in which they express their conception of the nature and character of God. Doubtless to the most of us the one whose beauty and power awakens the deepest feelings, and quickens the tenderest memories, is that one which in earliest childhood we learned from our mother's lips. It is the 23d Psalm, and is ascribed to David. The imagery is evidently suggested by the remembrance of his early life when he cared for his father's flocks on the Judean hills, and when day and night, "with all their changeful pageantry," led to meditation on that personal Power whose presence is everywhere, and whose care is round about us all.

"Jehovah is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures;
He leadeth me beside the still waters.
He restoreth my soul;
He guideth me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake."

And the Psalm closes with the words:

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,
And I shall dwell in the house of Jehovah forever."

No words could more tenderly express trust in God's goodness, and they voice the feelings of the human heart to-day as fully as when they were uttered by the royal psalmist nearly thirty centuries ago.

But if these songs of praise teach in such rich and varied forms and with such entire trust the mercy and loving-kindness of Jehovah, what shall we say of the so-called imprecatory Psalms? These are often referred to as indicating a spirit of vengeance in the heart of the author, and implying the conception of a merciless God. We may frankly confess that they are quite unlike the prayer of our Lord when the Roman soldiers were nailing him to the cross: "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23 : 34). But even that prayer implies the recognition of a crime and the desert of retribution. Moreover, no one has ever condemned sin with more intense terms and with clearer conception of its awful nature. Again and again, in the 23d chapter of Matthew, he says: "Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites," and ends this series of terrible denunciations with the words: "Ye serpents, ye offspring of vipers, how shall ye escape the damnation of hell?" Nothing could be severer than this, and nothing is more frequently overlooked in setting forth the teaching of the Lord Jesus.

But, as regards these Psalms of imprecation (the 35th, 69th, 94th, 109th, and others), these things should be said: First, the self-revelation of God recorded in the sacred history has been progressive, a fact sometimes forgotten by both friends and foes of the Bible. The authors of the Psalms lived at a time in which, while more advanced than that of the patriarchal and Mosaic periods, the full and final disclosure of the attributes of God in their just balance and proportion had not yet been made. If, as I have said, we would judge men fairly it must be with reference to the knowledge and conditions of their day.

In the second place, the imprecatory Psalms are not personal in the sense that they express the vengeful feelings of the authors' arising because of wrongs done to themselves. It is against the enemies of Jehovah that they utter these severe denunciations. It is for the cause of God that they are passionately pleading, which is the cause of righteousness. It is upon the "workers of iniquity" that they call for retributory punishment, upon those who "slay the widow and the sojourner and murder the fatherless," and who say, in their extreme scepticism: "Jehovah will not see, neither will the God of Jacob consider" (94 : 4, 6, 7).

In the third place, the main impression of the Psalms as a whole gives to us the conception of God's mercy and loving-kindness. These attributes are mentioned and implied far more frequently than the attribute of justice which inflicts the penalties due to sin, and they awaken constantly the most exalted expressions of

gratitude and praise. The fundamental note of the entire body of this religious poetry is given by them, and should to some extent modify the harsher tone of the imprecatory Psalms.

In the fourth place, let us remember that justice is not mere benevolence nor mercy a weak and sentimental emotion which disregards the guilt of sin. Too often, in these later days especially, is this lessened sense of righteousness shown in seeking relief and pardon for those who have violated the most sacred moral obligations, the most imperative moral laws that secure the safety of society, and who show no penitence or quickened sense of the evil they have done. Not only individuals but also nations, as we see to-day, are the objects of this maudlin pity, which would do away with the sanctions of righteousness and destroy the structural basis on which a moral civilization can alone securely rest.

Lastly, in estimating the character of the imprecatory Psalms we must not forget the essential difference between the Occidental and the Oriental mind. The Bible is the book of an Oriental people, whose emotions are intense and easily aroused, and are expressed in terms of extreme vividness and power; and poetry is the language of feeling and imagination, and in Eastern lands rises to a passionate strain, which to the colder Occidental mind may seem far beyond the limits of sobriety and truth. This creates one of the difficulties we constantly encounter in interpreting the Bible. East and West, though both have the common attri-

butes of humanity, cannot always find a common point of view in their outlook upon man and God. Kipling has voiced this in the lines:

"Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet,
Till earth and sky stand presently at God's great Judgement seat."

Hence, in the study of Oriental literature, especially that of the Bible, we should neither ignore nor lessen, nor, on the other hand, overestimate this racial difference.

I have spoken of the fact that the psalmists reveal sometimes a deep perplexity and distress when they contemplate broadly God's government of the world. Moral evil seems not only prevalent but all-controlling. The righteous are afflicted and the wicked triumphant. God hides himself in impenetrable mystery, and there are those who with insolent scepticism deny his presence and power.

This question is the subject of the book of Job. No greater book in Hebrew literature, nor in the literatures of other peoples, has ever been written. It belongs not to one age, but to all ages, not to one people, but to all peoples. Professor Moulton, in his introduction to this book in the "Modern Reader's Bible," says that doubtless a consensus of literary opinion would pronounce it the greatest book in the world. Its author is unknown. The date is a matter of conjecture. In form it is dramatic. The action is not scenic or exter-

nal, but wholly within the minds and hearts of Job and his friends. The attempt has been made to place it upon the stage, but it does not easily lend itself to such presentation. It is a book for the closet and for quiet contemplative reading. The thought and emotion expressed in the dialogue are what attract and hold attention, and the thought is altogether concerning God and the emotions are such as this thought awakens.

In seeking the idea of God set forth in the book of Job we must consider it as a whole. Its dramatic character demands this. Perhaps no book in the Bible has suffered more through neglect of a general consideration of the author's purpose. Many a sermon has been built on texts taken at random without regard to the generic thought. The intention of the author, in part at least, was to present and reject a prevalent conception of God, and to substitute another more in accordance with the facts of life. The friends of Job hold the prevailing view, viz., that those only suffer who sin, a view which the disciples of our Lord evidently held and which led them to say, "Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?"—a view also which is held still by not a few to-day, and Job, in his character and experiences and passionate affirmations of integrity and outcries against his misfortunes, is used to destroy it. But the purpose is not merely destructive. There is a positive conception of God presented. We are not left in final and utter darkness as to his nature and character and our right relations to him.

The story in its main outlines is familiar. In the prologue Job is represented as a man of great wealth, of high position, and of exalted piety. It is upon the last that the emphasis is placed. In the opening words, descriptive of Job and his conditions, it is affirmed by the author. It is twice declared by God in speaking of Job to Satan. Job's wife, who in some respects was doubtless the best human authority as to the character of Job, asserts it. But Satan, or the adversary, as the word is more accurately translated, who may be called the district attorney of the universe, whose function is to spy out and bring transgressors to trial, suggests a doubt. Does Job fear God for naught? Is his piety disinterested? "Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth thy hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will renounce thee to thy face." Then, with the divine permission, the test is made. By four immediately successive strokes, flocks and herds and servants and children are destroyed. But Job's piety withstands the test. With sublime submission he exclaims: "Jehovah gave and Jehovah hath taken away; blessed be the name of Jehovah."

Then follows a severer and final test. Job is himself stricken. Black leprosy, of all diseases the worst, and by man incurable, falls upon him. The piety of his wife fails. She bids him renounce God and die. But Job replies: "What? Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips."

Then Job's three friends came "to bemoan him and to comfort him" as he sits among the ashes on the refuse-heap without the city. Many days and nights have passed since affliction fell upon him, days which he pathetically describes as "swifter than the weaver's shuttle, and spent without hope" and nights which are "full of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day."

Beside him for seven such days and nights his friends sit in silent sympathy, "for they saw that his grief was very great." Then, at last, his long pent-up emotions break the silence and burst forth in that awful imprecation in which he curses the day of his birth and the night of his conception, and passionately longs for death to relieve his misery. The friends are astonished and perplexed. They had evidently expected penitence and a reawakening of faith, instead of this bitter arraignment of the providence of God. They had come with a theory—a theory which like not a little of our scientific philosophy and theology is a false inference based on actual facts. Job is an extreme sufferer, *therefore* he must have been a great sinner. Only in this way can they explain his afflictions. It is their view, the then orthodox view, of the divine government of the world; and throughout the entire drama, with cold and pitiless insistence, they argue for it as the truth. The law is even-handed and exact. Only the good prosper; only the evil are afflicted.

Job, doubtless, once believed this. But now experience has shattered his belief. He is conscious of his integ-

rity. He will not deny this inward witness. His cause is righteous (6 : 29). It is his consolation that he "has not denied the words of the Holy One" (6 : 10). And yet he is overwhelmed with the extremity of suffering. God treats him as if he were a sinner; and mankind, sustained and justified, apparently, by this treatment, have turned against him. He has become "a byword of the people," children mock his misfortunes, and his nearest friends pursue him pitilessly not only with veiled implications but at last with open assertions that his iniquities have been great (22 : 5).

But just this is the cause of Job's profound and hopeless perplexity. As to Hamlet, so to him the world seems out of joint; and he is led boldly to question the righteousness of the divine government. Why should he, a God-fearing man, suffer? Why should he have fallen from the height of prosperity and regard to the depths of want and woe?

But it is not himself alone that Job considers. During these weeks of unrelieved agony his thoughts have been quickened, and his observation of the life of man has taken a broader scope and his discernment has become more keen and accurate. He looks out with clearer eye upon the world, and he replies to his friends:

"Mark me and be astonished,
And lay your hand upon your mouth.
Even when I remember I am troubled,
And horror taketh hold on my flesh.
Wherefore do the wicked live,
Become old, yea, wax mighty in power?" (21 : 5–7).

Nay, he goes beyond this questioning attitude and openly ascribes the cause to God:

"The tents of robbers prosper,
And they that provoke God are secure,
Into whose hand God bringeth abundantly." (12 : 6).

"The earth is given into the hand of the wicked."

God "covereth the faces of the judges thereof:
If it be not he, who then is it?" (9 : 24).

There is no moral discrimination:

"It is all one; therefore I say,
He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked" (9 : 22).

This is indeed extreme statement and seemed the most daring impiety to Job's friends, as to many of us it still may seem. But it is wrung from Job by the loss and agonies he personally suffers and by the wider outlook on the life of man. Yet as the debate continues he rises in some degree from this depth of moral doubt into which his experience has plunged him, although at times this mood returns. He does not, however, descend still further, as atheists do, who, denying God's personal existence, and in sullen submission to the evils of life, conceive of the power that controls the world as irresistible, unconscious force. Job was too essentially a monotheist to hold that conception. But believing in the living God with a conviction which nothing could destroy, he yet failed to find a rule of righteousness, and his spirit struggles with this impenetrable mystery through the long cycles of the debate.

In many brilliant passages he describes the limitless, resistless power of this *un*moral God.

"Who," he cries out, "hath hardened himself against him
and prospered?
Him that removeth the mountains and they know it not,
When he overturneth them in his anger,
That shaketh the earth out of its place,
And the pillars thereof tremble:
That commandeth the sun, and it riseth not,
And sealeth up the stars;
That alone stretcheth out the heavens,
And treadeth upon the waves of the sea;
That maketh the Bear, Orion and the Pleiades,
And the chambers of the south,
That doeth great things past finding out,
Yea, marvelous things without number.
Lo, he goeth by me, and I see him not;
He passeth on also, but I perceive him not.
Behold, he seizeth the prey, who can hinder him?
Who shall say unto him, what doest thou?"

Thus Job, in agony of mind and body, is tossed about on this wide, wild sea of doubt and despair until the whirlwind and the storm break upon them, and out of these the divine voice speaks. Then at last Job attains quietness of spirit and peace. But it is not the peace which comes through understanding. The mystery is not resolved. It would have been easy but insufficient to have stated the solution of the prologue—that Job's sufferings were the test of his piety. The question had become far broader. It now involved God's entire rule in the moral world, and for this a merely intellectual answer were not enough. The answer must meet and

still the far profounder emotions of the heart. This can only be done, as the Bible everywhere does it, by awakening trust—trust in the ever-present, ever-living God. In other words, the true solution for Job and also for us, of the moral mysteries of the world, is one of faith. We cannot comprehend God. "Clouds and darkness," as the psalmist said, "are round about his throne." *Yet, there is the throne.* It is revealed, as the divine voice declares, in laying the foundations of the earth; in setting bars and doors to the sea, and in saying to it: "Hitherto shalt thou come but no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed"; in establishing the ordinances of the heavens, binding and loosing the constellations; in a word, in the supreme control of all those mighty forces which are at work in the inanimate and animate worlds of nature, by which wisdom and power are revealed.

All this, of course, though in terms less eloquent, had been said by Job and by his friends. But there is a difference. It is now God himself who speaks. He does not argue. He does not explain. That would have been too human, too undivine. There is the overwhelming vision of a supreme personality, and it compels Job to exclaim:

> "I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear,
> Now mine eye seeth thee."

We all understand this difference. The written word, the word read, is ineffectual compared with the spoken word. There are impressions mysteriously con-

veyed by this which suggest elements of character that nothing else can give. The voice out of the storm gave these impressions, and was prophetic of that living, personal voice which was heard in Galilee and Judea centuries later, which the Apostle John characterizes as *the* Word—the Word which "became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father) full of grace and truth" (John 1 : 14). Job had cried out for this face-to-face meeting with God (23 : 3; 13 : 3). It is the universal cry of the human heart, and men have sought in many imperfect ways to answer this elemental cry. Longing for a visible, tangible God, they have resorted to idolatry. But images of gold and silver and stone graven into human form by art and device of man have been insufficient. Nor have trees, nor mountains, nor the varied forms of animal life, nor stars and suns, nor the o'erarching heaven itself, all of which men have worshipped, been adequate to meet this longing. But when God himself comes and speaks, even in darkness and storm, as he did to Job, we are like children, who in the terror of the night hear the voice of the father and put forth our hand to feel the reassuring grasp which dispels all fear and guides our steps to safety and to light.

The book of Job, therefore, presents to us the conception of a God who does not merely hide himself, but who, while his ways are past finding out, and who dwells in the depths of an infinite mystery which no finite mind can fathom, speaks directly to man, and reveals

himself as the enduring ground of an unfaltering faith. In this faith we can rest secure, even though evils throng about us and it seems at times as though truth were "forever on the scaffold, wrong forever on the throne," yet God stands "within the shadow, keeping watch above his own."

The book of Job also presents a God who, though he may permit men of the truest piety to be tested by the severest sufferings and troubled by almost the extremity of doubt as to the righteousness of his rule, will at last resolve these doubts and restore them to prosperity and peace. For the book ends, as all ideal constructions should end, with Job rescued from his afflictions and surrounded by blessings greater than he had lost.

The book also teaches that God regards with greater favor sincere and honest doubt than those glib and theoretic arguments in his behalf which are regardless of the salient facts of life. This was the attitude of Job's friends; or, as he puts it in a question to them: "Will ye speak unrighteously for God?" (13:7). They uttered many fine truths; but these did not fit the case of Job, and were false to those larger facts of experience which he saw and declared. Hence, in the end Job is commended and his friends condemned (42:7). This may seem strange to those who fail to grasp the full and tragic significance of this great book; who, to use the words of Job, would "show partiality to" God, that is, would make religious belief a thing of partisanship and not a matter of essential fact and truth. Against this attitude the book of Job is a per-

petual rebuke. To his friends he was a heretic, persistent in his obduracy; but he was one of those heretics who break the chains of proscription and the hardened crust of a merely traditional conservatism, and who lead thought into a broader field and a larger freedom. Such were Luther and Paul and our Lord himself.

There remains to be considered one book more of this group of sacred writings. We pass over the rest because they are not essential to our purpose. It is Ecclesiastes. To many it is a strange book, and its right to a place in the sacred canon has been questioned. Its authorship, and composition, and the time when it was written, are subjects of critical controversy. These questions, however, we leave to others. Our interest is in what the book teaches concerning God. It is evidently a record of the author's experience. He begins with pronouncing all things "vanity and a striving after wind." This phrase comes again and again, a constant and sad refrain. There is a monotonous and wearisome sameness in life. At times the author seems to be a sceptic, an agnostic, a pessimist, an epicurean. He has tested all that men strive for and they bring no satisfaction. Hope is elusive, a lasting good is beyond our grasp, and death is the end for both man and beast. And is this not true if such things as the author mentions, knowledge and wealth and power and pleasure, are made the chief aims of life? He has stated what every thoughtful mind at last perceives when these are made the leading objects of endeavor. There must be something more and nobler than these if man

is to realize the end for which he was created. The author's scepticism does not reach to the denial of God's existence. This conviction is too deeply seated to be denied or even doubted among all the other doubts that trouble him. God *is*, and he has "set eternity" in man's heart. There are ideas in the human mind which reach beyond the narrow scope of the merely finite. God also "hath made everything beautiful in its time" (3:11). There is, moreover, a moral order. "To the man that pleaseth him God giveth wisdom and knowledge and joy, but to the sinner he giveth travail" (2:26). "God will judge the righteous and the wicked" (3:17). "It shall be well with them that fear God, but it shall not be well with the wicked" (8:12, 13). Yet it must be acknowledged that these convictions do not always at once completely relieve the oppression of spirit under which the author suffered. They gleam like lights here and there in the darkness, now and then obscured by the clouds of doubt, but at last shine with a strong and steady radiance; for he sums up finally the matter in the words: "Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man" (12:13).

The book is helpful as a frank account of an inward conflict between truth and error, between the thought of God and the seemingly opposed thought of the inexplicable mysteries of his providence. Many a profound mind has passed through this conflict; nay, we may say that all, or nearly all, who have looked out thoughtfully on the facts of life have had, to some ex-

tent, this disquieting experience. Some, how many we know not, have passed through it safely and attained a stronger faith, a more radiant hope. Others, whose numbers, too, we know not, have lost all faith and hope, and have been plunged into the depths of a cynical agnosticism, or atheism, and despair. But even from these depths not a few have been restored, and in the frank records of the experience of travail of such souls we often learn the power of that revealed thought of God which is found in the Bible and in the Bible alone. No other religious literature has declared with such fulness, such clearness and force, as we have found in the Hebrew prophets and in the Psalms, that mercy and loving-kindness whose supreme aim is the moral redemption of mankind. It cannot be too often repeated that the Bible is not a book of ethics merely. It is a history, a history of God's gracious dealings with a people, with all peoples, and of the inward experiences and outward life of those who have known and felt the transforming power in human character of these gracious dealings. When this is clearly recognized there will be fewer fruitless controversies concerning its contents and transmission, and a unity of conviction as to its essential nature will prevail, brought about by the unifying power of its central yet all-pervading thought of the character and purpose of the living God.

VI

THE BIBLICAL IDEA OF GOD

IN THE TEACHING OF CHRIST AND HIS APOSTLES

Biologists in their study of life deal mainly with the earliest and simplest forms. So in our study of the Biblical idea of God we have begun with primitive conceptions and have dwelt more at length on their development throughout the Old Testament than will be necessary in considering the teaching of Christ and his apostles, to which we now have come. We shall find nothing essentially new in what they present. To them the Old Testament was the word of God. It had moulded their minds and determined their convictions and characters. They appealed to it as inspired and authoritative. They claim that they are fulfilling its predictions and declaring and enforcing its distinctive truths and duties.

But their teaching was not mere lifeless repetition. In this it was in decided contrast to that of the scribes and Pharisees. Truth to and in them was a vital power, not a dead formula. It grew, therefore, into new and higher and more impressive forms. There was increased emphasis upon certain elements which are found in the earlier revelation but which received through them a larger and clearer statement and effected a stronger and deeper conviction. As they conceived it, God's self-revelation was essentially the

same in content throughout the preceding ages, but in them it reached its culmination. In the claim of Christ, as well as in that of his apostles, he himself is the last and highest expression of the nature and character of God, both in his person and work. Beyond him progress is to be found only in the widening acceptance of his mission and person and the increasing influence of his character and work.

It is the fashion in these days of not a few, even within the limits of the Christian church, to regard our Lord as merely a teacher, and especially as a teacher of ethics. His moral code is acknowledged to be the loftiest the world has ever known. His miracles are doubted or denied, and what he taught concerning the exalted nature of his person is rejected and regarded as the later conceptions of his apostles and by them ascribed to him.

Certainly the Lord Jesus was a teacher of moral duty. The Sermon on the Mount is unsurpassed as a statement of that. Moreover, as was recognized by those who heard him, he taught with authority and not as the scribes, whose teaching was legalistic and without the force of a living conviction. His method was never tentative. He did not speculate. He seldom argued. There was no slowly developing process of logical reasoning, such as we find in Socrates. He never confused and troubled his disciples with the dialectic of the Greek schools. He spoke from an inward and vital conviction of truth directly to the heart of man, and the heart responded with an instinctive appre-

ciation and acceptance more controlling than that arising from a merely intellectual perception.

Moreover, unlike the philosophers and theologians, he was not systematic in the form and presentation of truth. There is no fixed order of arrangement. The Sermon on the Mount and some of the discourses in the Gospel of John are the nearest approach to this. He seized upon occasions as they came, and under the most ordinary circumstances and to the humblest persons taught the profoundest truths. His illustrations were taken from familiar scenes, and he made use of stories formed from the common experiences of life, whose force and beauty all could understand and whose inner meaning the earnest seeker after truth could clearly apprehend. Hence the common people heard him gladly, and men of profound minds also, like John and Paul, became his devoted disciples.

Duty, then, clothed in simplest and most attractive forms was a large part of our Lord's teaching, but it was only a part. For, however clearly and attractively presented, to be effective duty must be grounded on religious truth. Our actions are determined by our beliefs, especially by our beliefs concerning God. Fundamental, therefore, in our Lord's teaching is his conception of God's nature and character. This underlies and determines and gives effectiveness to his entire ethical code. Likeness to God is its supreme aim and the highest duty of man. "Ye, therefore," said he to his disciples, "shall be perfect, as your Heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. 5:48).

It is true that to the Greeks Plato had taught the supreme duty of likeness to God. But in order to be like God we must know God, not indeed exhaustively, yet really, though it be in an incomplete degree. Of such knowledge Plato confesses ignorance. "How," says he in the "Timæus," "can we find out the father and maker of all this universe? Or, when we have found him how shall we be able to speak of him to all men?" And despairing thus of man's attainment by himself of such knowledge he affirms the need of some one who shall reveal God to us in the fulness and majesty of his person. Thus in a limited sense, and unconsciously, Plato may be said to have been a prophet of the coming of our Lord.

It is to be noted that Plato uses the terms "father and maker," but at the same time acknowledges that their real and full significance is beyond the reach of the unaided mind. It is not strange that he should use them, especially the word father, as expressing a relationship between man and God, for it is an almost if not universal word used in the religions of the world. Jupiter means heaven father, and the savages of Guiana, as already stated, adore the "Ancient One in Skyland, our Maker, our Father, our Great Father" ("Making of Religion," Lang, page 222). But this word of relationship may have a purely natural sense. In certain primitive religions the god worshipped is looked upon as the physical ancestor of the tribe. It may mean the national deity. It may also mean the creator of mankind.

But what did Christ mean when he taught his disciples to say "Our Father"? The answer can only be found in the way he uses the term and in the conceptions he constantly associated with it. It is the word most frequently used by him to express his idea of God.

In the early years of my active ministry I was preaching a series of sermons on the catechism, a duty I am constrained to believe much neglected in the present time. When I came to the exposition of the Lord's prayer beginning with "Our Father," I consulted the system of theology of a great teacher who is said to have influenced the beliefs of more Presbyterian ministers than any other teacher of his day. Much to my surprise I found no treatment of, nor even reference to, God as a Father, nor was it mentioned in a voluminous index to the several volumes which contained the system. The word was found in many passages of Scripture quoted, but these were used for other ends than to set forth and emphasize the Fatherhood of God. I do not doubt that this great teacher believed in God's Fatherhood, but he made it no part of his system. I confess that the investigation changed in no slight degree my regard for the works of systematic theologians and turned me more entirely to the theology set forth in less scholastic and more vital forms in the sacred Scriptures. It is not to be denied that in many ways system is of great importance. But it may mar and injure the forms and relationships of truth. We not infrequently "murder to dissect." There seems to me to be nothing more injurious to our conceptions of the

relative values and importance of certain truths than those books which break up the natural order of the Scriptures and rearrange words and texts under certain formulæ which gratify only the logical understanding. Not in this way did the prophets, nor did Christ and his apostles, teach. Had they given us a system of theology instead of the truth as they have presented it, we may safely say that they would have had no wider and deeper influence over the lives and characters of men than have the dialogues of Plato and the treatises of Aristotle. Systems are determined by some central and dominating idea, and even if composed of truths, yet the truths are shaped and fitted in subordination to this idea, just as rocks from a quarry are shaped and fitted to conform to the architectural conception of the builder. This is the work of what Kant calls the Architectonic Reason, and to the reflective mind may be useful; but great care must be taken to secure the right idea that is to be central and controlling. In the ancient astronomy the Ptolemaic system was determined by the idea of the earth as central, and this led to many errors in tracing the relationships and movements of the planets; but when Copernicus conceived of the sun as central the system was radically changed, and the real order and motions of the earth and stars were at last understood.

If, therefore, we are to seek to systematize Christ's teaching, although he himself never presented it in systematic form, we must find its centre in God, and in that dominating truth concerning God to which all

other truths taught by him are related and subordinate. To me it seems clearly evident that this is found in the word Father. We may, indeed, ourselves draw from this word, as has been done, certain conclusions which are not found in his thought of God. We may infer from it a merely beneficent being, who is somewhat indifferent to moral standards, lessens in some degree moral obligations, ignores the strict requirement of moral penalties, and makes happiness rather than righteousness the supreme end. But in doing this we would fail to grasp Christ's full conception of God's character and purpose. We would disregard certain truths, which although to us they may seem out of harmony with the idea of Fatherhood yet evidently did not seem so to him. Such, for instance, is his conception of God as just in a retributive sense, and not merely beneficent, a conception to be considered later.

If we consult a concordance we shall find that our Lord uses the word God one hundred and seventy-two times. But the mere use of this word conveys no distinctive conception beyond the meaning ordinarily expressed by it. Of course, the way in which he uses it, the terms he associates with it, will convey distinct impressions loftier than those which the common mind generally receives. But whenever used by him we may, perhaps, substitute for God the word Father, without changing the significance attached to it.

In the first three gospels Father is found forty-three times, and in John one hundred and ten times in accounts of our Lord's teaching not reported by the

synoptics. It must have been used many more times by him, for it is recorded again and again that he taught the people without any statement of what he said. But enough of his teaching has been reported to convey to us its substance and distinctive character.

What, then, did Christ mean by the word Father? And what kind of a relationship did it express and how widely extended? Sometimes to his disciples he says "Your Father," and in the prayer he taught them they are to say "Our Father." Sometimes it is "Heavenly Father," sometimes "The Father," and sometimes simply Father. Very often it is "My Father." In John, Father is almost the exclusive word, and with the pronoun *my*, occurs thirty-three times. In the first three gospels it is thus used as frequently as *the* Father or *your* Father. But our Lord never says "*our* Father," including his disciples with himself, a distinction of supreme significance which was evidently recognized and carefully reported by them. It cannot be doubted, therefore, that he was conscious of a special relationship to God the Father not shared with him by men, and not constituted by moral character, as some claim, however perfect that may be. This consciousness appeared early in his life. In his twelfth year, when his parents sought him in Jerusalem, he said to them: "How is it that ye sought me? Know ye not that I must be in my Father's house?" (Luke 2:49).

But it is not with our Lord's person and his peculiar

relationship to the Father that we are just now concerned, but with the person of the Father himself.

Fundamental in his teaching is his conception of God as spirit. To the Samaritan woman whom he met at Jacob's well, and who raised the question whether God was rightly worshipped on Mt. Gerizem or in Jerusalem, he said: "God is spirit and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4 : 24). He does not define the term spirit, but assumes that its meaning is sufficiently clear. The Samaritans accepted the Old Testament, and that, as we have seen, taught the spiritual nature of God. Although to them worship might be limited to time and place, yet God was not so limited. He transcends all existences and possesses all the essential spiritual attributes of knowledge, affection, and volition, and is the source of truth and wisdom and righteousness and grace.

Spirit, as we have seen, is not a negative term, although by many it is usually so defined. It is not merely *im*material being. It has a positive content, as was stated in the first lecture. It is within himself, in the elemental and necessary deliverances of consciousness, that man must find the essential nature and real significance of spirit. Not in the forms of earth and sky, not in tree or mountain, not in beast or bird, not in sun or star, not even in the human form itself, noble and beautiful as that is, all of which have been made objects of worship, but in the mind and its essential powers, of whose nature the lowest savage is dimly conscious, are we to find the kind of being possessed by

spirit. For, made in the divine image, man reflects as in a mirror the divine attributes, though in man they are limited by finiteness, and, as created, have a beginning in time.

It should be noted that in his conversation with this woman of Samaria our Lord speaks of God not only as spirit, but also as the Father. Did he include the Samaritans, so intensely hated by the Jews, among the children of God? That he did would clearly seem to be sustained by the parable of the good Samaritan. If, then, these half-pagan, half-Jewish people, why not all mankind? Is God the Father of only a portion of our race? Is his redemptive plan and purpose so limited that not all have the privilege, nay, even the right, a right given and confirmed by himself, to use the opening words, "Our Father," of the prayer Christ taught? It is an old question much debated. But when we remember the words "God so loved the world," not a part of it, not the best and noblest of it, but all of it, this sinful world, "that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16), and when we read in the first epistle of the beloved disciple that Jesus Christ "is the propitiation for our sin; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world" (I John 2:2), we must believe, despite all that theological subtlety can do to wrest these words from their natural meaning and narrow their scope and purpose, that the Fatherhood of God is as wide as the creation of beings like himself, and also rests on the fact not merely that

he is their creator, but that he has redeemed them by the most costly of sacrifices, and would have all men accept this redemption which he has made and offers.

But since God is spirit, and is also, as the author of Hebrews says, "the Father of spirits" (Heb. 12 : 9), he is therefore *personal*. So Christ constantly conceives of him. There is no vague, pantheistic idea in his teaching. As we have seen, the Hebrew thought of God was intensely personal. To the prophets he was a supreme moral and beneficent Will, revealing himself in both command and promise. This conception of the divine nature and character the Lord Jesus expresses everywhere, and in all his teaching, by the well-side, on the mountain, along the seashore, and in the synagogue and the temple. To him the Father was constantly a conscious presence and a gracious power. He brings men face to face with the living God. The impersonal God of Greek and Oriental sages and of some modern philosophers, the God of mere being, undefined and all-pervasive, regardless of moral distinctions and of man's moral welfare, and neither a hearer nor answerer of prayer, may awaken awe and fear, but cannot inspire trust nor create affection. Man stands speechless before such a conception. Its only effect is the stoicism of despair.

But while the idea of God as spirit and therefore, as in the highest sense, a person is both explicit and implicit in all our Lord's teaching, and the word Father is the distinctive and explanatory word which he uses to express his idea, there are certain conceptions con-

veyed or suggested by it which he does not fail to set forth, and which, like overtones in music, give fulness and richness to the fundamental idea. For the term Father is a comprehensive term and includes specific characteristics and relationships, which only other words can distinctly state.

Thus Christ teaches that God is the creator, that the world is not self-evolved but owes its existence to his intelligence and power. In predicting the destruction of Jerusalem, he said: "Those days shall be tribulation such as there hath not been the like from the beginning of the creation which God created until now" (Mark 13 : 19). The Father's care also is over all his works. "Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them" (Matt. 6 : 26). His providence, also, is not merely general but special. "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny; and not one of them shall fall on the ground without your Father" (Matt. 10 : 29). When the seventy returned from their mission, in his prayer he addressed God as "Father, lord of heaven and earth" (Luke 10 : 21). To the lawyer who asked what is the great commandment, he replied that God is the supreme object of affection: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind" (Matt. 22 : 37). To the tempter he affirms him to be the sole object of worship. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and him only shalt thou serve" (Matt. 4 : 10). God, also, is seen in the forces and forms of nature.

His hand clothes the grass of the field and fashions the growth and beauty of the lily (Matt. 6:26–30). To the young man who sought to know what he must do to inherit eternal life Christ taught that God alone is good (Matt. 19:17). This goodness is not confined to the righteous only, "for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust" (Matt. 5:45). To the astonished disciples, doubting the possibility of man's salvation, he affirmed that "with God all things are possible" (Matt. 19:26).

But Christ also taught that justice, the justice that inflicts penalty for sin, is a divine attribute. This clearly appears in the series of woes pronounced against the scribes and Pharisees and lawyers (Matt. 23:13–36; Luke 11:42–52). It appears also in the parables of Dives and Lazarus (Luke 16:19–31), of the rich fool (Luke 12:16–21), of the unmerciful servant (Matt. 18:23–35), of the wicked husbandman (Matt. 21:33–44). In our Lord's teaching, therefore, sin and suffering are linked together as cause and effect, a relationship established and enforced by the justice of God. If the prodigal son leaves his home, wanders into a far country and consumes his inheritance in riotous living, he cannot escape the bitter consequences of his acts. Retribution in the moral world is as inevitable as any result of the violation of a law of nature.

It is well for us to remember, especially in these days, that this truth is as elemental as any other, in Christ's idea of God. He never obscured to himself and others

the stern facts of life, but faced them resolutely and interpreted them as revelations of God's character in his government of the world. In his conception there is a wrath of God against unbelief, and "all ungodliness and unrighteousness of man" (John 3 : 36; Romans 1 : 18).

But while Fatherhood does not exclude justice, justice does not exclude mercy. Justice is the dark background against which mercy shines with a greater splendor. For were there no righteous condemnation there would be no occasion for the exercise of Grace. For Grace, as it has been well defined, is "favor toward the ill-deserving." And the supreme end of justice in God is not retribution but restoration. This was the teaching of Ezekiel. "I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord Jehovah, wherefore turn yourselves and live" (Ezek. 18 : 32). Micah also said: "He delighteth in lovingkindness" (7 : 18). This was also taught by the Apostle Peter, who wrote that God did not wish "that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (II Peter 3 : 9). It is clearly involved in what our Lord states concerning the end of his mission. To Nicodemus he said: "For God sent not his Son into the world to judge (that is, to condemn) the world, but that the world should be saved through him" (John 3 : 17). To those who murmured because he went in to lodge with Zacchæus, whom they held to be a sinner, he said: "The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19 : 10). And still again to the people he cried: "I came not to

judge the world, but to save the world" (John 12:47). Such sayings also are not to be understood as expressing merely the purpose of Christ himself, but primarily, as he said, the purpose of the Father who sent him.

Mercy, then, we may rightly say, is, according to Christ, the predominant attribute of God and is best expressed by the name Father. It is the main element in God's perfection, for in the Sermon on the Mount, at the close of the paragraph in which Christ says, "Love your enemies and pray for them that persecute you, that ye may be sons of your Father who is in heaven," he also says, and it is clear that the conclusion is closely connected with what precedes, "Ye therefore shall be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. 5:44–48). To be merciful constitutes the perfection of the divine character as it does that of men. This is also the teaching of the Apostle John, when he writes: "If we confess our sins He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9). To forgive and cleanse is elemental in the divine righteousness, and its essential aim. Paul, also, teaches the same truth when he writes of God as being "just and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus" (Romans 3:26).

But this great truth in Christ's thought of God is found expressed with the greatest clearness and beauty in the three parables of the lost coin, the lost sheep, and the lost boy. With the exception of one, the lost sheep, given by Matthew (18:12–14), we owe these to Luke, the Greek companion of Paul. The occasion for

them was when "the publicans and sinners were drawing near unto him to hear him" and both the Pharisees and the scribes murmured, saying: "This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them" (Luke 15:1, 2). But why did they murmur? It was because of *their* thought of God. To them his law was merely one of retribution, an even-handed justice which gives to each his exact due. According to their standard they themselves were righteous and would alone receive reward. All others merited perdition, for God hates not merely sin but sinners (John 9:31).

Against this false conception of the character of God these parables were spoken. Men are indeed lost in sin. Christ clearly teaches that. But they have not lost their essential nature. They are still moral creatures, whose deepest need is the restoration of the character they have lost; and the marvellous fact is that God is seeking to accomplish this, just as the woman seeks the lost coin, the shepherd the lost sheep, and the father welcomes with joy the repentant and returning prodigal. It is this joy which stands out prominent and radiant in these parables, emphasized in each, joy in heaven, joy in the presence of the angels of God, that is, in the heart of God himself, and which pervades the whole household, with the exception of the elder brother. Moreover, it is said in the first two parables that they seek *until they find;* a statement we should not overlook, although by some slight emphasis seems to be laid upon it. It is an everlasting mercy that our Lord here plainly teaches, a truth long before taught

by a psalmist, although Christ states here no limitations of time or character. It is simply the *lost* one who is sought. Through all time God our Father has been seeking and still seeks to save.

This, as was once pointed out by President Julius Seeley of Amherst College, in a series of lectures to the Brahmins and Buddhists of India, is the distinctive character of the religion of the Bible and differentiates it from all the other religions of the world. They present man as seeking after God, but the Bible presents God as seeking after man. This distinction by itself should cause a thoughtful mind to pause before rejecting the Bible as God's revelation of himself. It is a truth, however, which men find hard to believe. A justice which condemns is easy to understand. A righteousness which includes mercy as an essential element seems to involve a contradiction in itself. For an awakened conscience knows only the guilt of sin and its worthiness of punishment; and unenlightened reason finds no escape from that. Fear fills the apprehensive soul, and darkness unrelieved by hope veils alike its present and its future. The relentless furies of the Greek mythology express this universal conviction of men to whom the revealed light of the gospel has not come. Without this conviction there would be no tragedies in this our world. It is the inevitable feeling of guilt, with its attendant terrors, that constitutes the essence of tragedy. The Greek dramatists present it in scenes of awful sublimity and power. In his greatest tragedies Shakespeare shows his clear and

profound knowledge of its effective work within the human soul.

"Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood clean from my hand?"

cries out Macbeth after Duncan's murder; and Lady Macbeth in that terrible sleep-walking scene, says:

All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. Here is the smell of the blood still.

This is the expression of a conscience, agonized by the sense of guilt; and aside from revelation man knows of no "sweet oblivious antidote" that shall "cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff which weighs upon the heart."

But to accomplish this, to persuade conscience-stricken men that there is a grace of God toward even the vilest violators of his law, and that righteousness and grace are not distinct and conflicting attributes, but God's righteousness is of that nobler kind within which grace is included and which makes righteous—to persuade men of this was the aim, and has been the effect of the ministry of Jesus Christ, and the acceptance of this divinely given truth has ever been the initial step of that spiritual work within the soul which cleanses and restores.

Among the many incidents of our Lord's life which show this there is one in which it appears with pathetic power and beauty. A proud, self-righteous Pharisee

had invited him to dinner. He was received without those ordinary forms of courtesy shown to a guest. But a woman who was a sinner came behind him as he reclined at meat, and bathed his feet with her tears, and kissed them and anointed them with precious ointment. The hard Pharisee, untouched by the scene, in his thought condemned the woman, because she was a sinner—a harlot, doubtless—and condemned our Lord also because he did not shrink from her touch as from pollution. But Jesus said to her: "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace" (Luke 7 : 36–50). Think you that the attitude and word of the Lord Jesus was without transforming power? Think you that henceforth this woman's life was not consecrated to all that is noblest and best? The Pharisee would have turned her back to her vile life on the street, but the Lord Jesus turned her feet into the paths of righteousness and peace.

For it is the power of love, love toward the erring and the fallen, love whose attitude is grace and whose effect is righteousness, love which in securing such result sacrifices self—this is the only power which can redeem the world; and this is that divine love which has been revealed by and in Jesus Christ. John, the beloved disciple, who, despite the teaching of some modern scholars, we must believe best understood and reported his Master's thought, tells us that love is God's essential nature; "God," he wrote, "is love" (I John 4 : 8). Of no other attribute is such a statement made in the sacred Scriptures. It is never said

that God is justice. It is, indeed, written that "God is spirit" and that "God is light." But spirit and light are not distinct attributes but general characteristics of the divine nature. Since, therefore, God *is* love, not to love would be for God to deny himself; and the most wonderful aspect of his love is that it persists, although its object is no longer worthy of it. Of such love Paul wrote that "it suffereth long and is kind" (I Cor. 13 : 4). Hosea, the prophet, knew and expressed its enduring quality and power in the yearning tenderness with which he pursued and sought to restore an erring wife. And yet the astonishing fact is that men fail to recognize and believe in this divine love. Not merely those who violate every moral law, but those also who, upright in character and life, are made blind to its beauty and insensitive to its power through unbelief. Christianity has no harder task than to convince such persons of its truth. To the chief priests and the elders, proud of their righteousness, Christ said: "The publicans and the harlots go into the Kingdom of God before you" (Matt. 21 : 31).

At the root of not a little of the present-day rejection of the gospel is the philosophic conception of an emotionless God. For philosophy, as the expression of pure intellect, places little if any stress on feeling. It regards this as a mist obscuring the clear perceptions of the mind, and this is true if feeling is excessive and uncontrolled. But that God is impassive, without emotion, is not the teaching of the Bible. Love and hate, joy and grief, are ascribed to him. This may be dis-

missed as a merely anthropomorphic conception, but, if it be not true, then we cannot call him Father, and there can be no revelation of himself which shall touch the human heart and awaken those profound motive forces which determine and give richness and beauty to character and life. As a Father he grieves because of our transgressions, and rejoices over our return. The cold formalist and legalist and the moralist, whose obedience is to a merely abstract law, cannot understand this; but every one who has felt the awful agonies and degradation of sin can understand it; and when men really believe the message of Christ concerning a God who loves, then their delivery from all the evils that oppress them has drawn near.

Love, then, being the central and dominating element in the nature of God, in what way and form, we ask, is this love expressed? What is its highest manifestation? Is it not in the cross? This is the answer which our Lord and his apostles give. "Greater love," said he to his disciples, "hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15 : 13). "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son," are his words to Nicodemus (John 3 : 16). To the Romans Paul wrote: "God commendeth [or showeth or proveth, as it may be rendered] his own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (Romans 5 : 8). To the Ephesians, also, he wrote that "God, being rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ"

(Eph. 2:4, 5; see also II Thess. 2:16; Gal. 2:20). And John, who in his three brief epistles uses the word forty-six times, wrote: "Herein is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (I John 4:10).

But there is no need to multiply proofs. It is not merely in special texts but in the total impression which the gospel makes that this greatest of all truths is declared. The logic of a system of theology that is based upon a conception of God's nature which makes unrelenting justice the central and all-dominating attribute and mercy merely the option of his will may blind one to this teaching of the Bible, and such a system may be taught in the cloistered classroom of the school, but in the world without, where men sin and suffer and need to be quickened to faith and hope and love, it is only the Biblical truth that can accomplish this. For love alone awakens love. No other power in earth or heaven can effect this spiritual transformation. Human life unilluminated by divine revelation plainly proves this. Faith and love are the only forces that unite the family and society with bonds that bring no bitterness, and create only peace and joy.

Once more, then, we say that love is the essential element in the nature of God, and its supreme expression is the cross. It is, as it has been called, "the greatest thing in the world," the last and noblest word which God has spoken of himself. Beyond it there is no loftier, no completer revelation. It is the sum of all divine attributes, the final and most effective of all

divine activities. It is not expressed by word only but by historic act. It is not an abstract formula, which the intellect alone can grasp, but a concrete event occurring in the fulness of time, toward which the whole past led and from which the whole future springs. Here on Calvary all essential questions find an answer. Here all antagonisms cease. Here all dissonances disappear. Here all difficulties are solved. Here justice and mercy, righteousness and grace, meet and mingle in enduring harmony to express a love that is divine. Love, therefore, is not a distinct attribute, but rather an attitude of God in which all attributes have been transfigured and into which they have been transformed.

But a severely analytic theology has not been satisfied to rest here in contemplation of this sublime fact. It has entered into the profound mystery of the divine nature and has sought to show the order and relationship of the various divine attributes which find expression in the cross of Christ. Bitter and intense controversies have arisen, in which love, the supreme expression of the cross, has been forgotten and obscured. The theologians of an older school look upon the cross as revealing a divine insistence upon penalty which would not abate the least and the utmost of its claims. Retribution to them is a divine necessity, and justice finds its satisfaction in the sufferings of Christ. An eminent teacher of this school has written: "God *must be* just and *may be* merciful." That he must be just is not to be denied; and that the death of Christ was strictly

propitiatory is clearly taught in the Scriptures. The Old Testament sacrificial system symbolized this, and he himself said that he gave his life "a ransom for many" (Mark 10 : 45), and that his blood was "poured out for many unto remission of sins" (Matt. 26 : 28). Both Paul and John call Christ a propitiatory offering for sin. But that satisfaction is found merely or mainly in the *sufferings* of the cross is simply inferential, and the Scriptural conception of the character and nature of God does not lead to this conclusion. If love is the very essence of God, as John wrote, then mercy, which is the expression of love, is no more merely optional than justice is, but is an equally inner and even deeper necessity of the divine nature. As the prophet Micah wrote: "Who is a God like unto thee who pardoneth iniquity, and passeth over the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger forever, because he delighteth in lovingkindness" (Micah 7 : 18). If God found satisfaction in the cross, was it not rather in the supreme obedience of Christ, an obedience which finds its perfect expression in the sacrifice of self for the welfare of others? Paul suggests this in the words, he became "obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross" (Phil. 2 : 8). What God desires and seeks in man is righteousness, in its highest and purest form, the righteousness which comes from faith and is identical with love, and this righteousness he found in the Son of man, the universal Man, who alone realized in his life and death what man ought to be, and in whom all men are summed up

who trust in him (Eph. 1 : 10), and in finding this God finds his deepest satisfaction. Not suffering, then, as meeting merely the claims of retributive justice, but suffering endured for man's salvation, and as expressive of a love that shrank from nothing to accomplish this great end, this is the meaning of the cross (see John 3 : 16, 17). And it is this that makes the gospel that proclaims the cross a word of power, of consolation, and of hope and joy. Take the cross, as the expression and proof of a divine love, out of the Christian message, as is so often done, and that message has lost its elemental force. Not in science, not in philosophy, but only in the historic Christ, who lived and died and rose again, lie the sources of that redemption which shall rescue man from the evils that now oppress him and restore him to righteousness, and to that love of moral truth and beauty and goodness which is righteousness in its noblest form.

Is it strange, then, that the Christian church, through all the centuries and in all the parts into which it has been broken, has clung to the cross as the symbol of its salvation? Is it strange that in the hymns which voice its strongest faith and quicken and express its deepest emotions, it should sing the grace and glory of the cross? Is it strange that our Lord, in the last hours of his earthly life, should institute an ordinance which should forever, until his return, keep the cross in our remembrance? Is it strange that we should hold it to be the central object in the history of the world, and its victim the central person? To it men have looked

and still will look with eyes in whose depths shine faith and hope until there is the fulfilment of our Lord's words: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself" (John 12:32). For the cross expresses love in its highest and noblest form and in its most effective power.

One more essential truth in the self-revelation of God remains. There is one God and only one, according to the Bible. But he has manifested himself in a threefold way as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The nature of this triune manifestation awakened and occupied the earliest thought of the church, and the Greek fathers formulated it in a creed which has never been surpassed. The New Testament explicitly teaches the essential deity of the Son and of the Spirit; and this was the belief of the church from its beginning. Christ claimed essential oneness with the Father. To the reviling Jews he said, "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30), one not merely in ethical character, but one in power and being; for this is what the Jews understood him to mean, as is clearly indicated by their reply: "Thou being a man makest thyself God" (John 10:33). Hence they accused him of blasphemy. This understanding Jesus did not deny. He also claimed the essential attribute of eternity. To the Jews again he said: "Before Abraham was [or came to be] I am" (John 8:58). In his prayer after the supper he also said: "And now, Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (John 17:5). This is also the teaching of

John in the prologue to his gospel. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). That he means the personal Word, that is, the eternal Son, is shown by the later statement: "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). It was distinctly taught by Paul in his letter to the Philippians, where he wrote of Christ Jesus as one, "who existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped" (Phil. 2:6); that is, he needed not to seize upon "equality with God," for it was what he already from the beginning had. In the beginning of the epistle to the Hebrews the Son of God is described, in terms of profound significance, as "being the effulgence [or shining forth] of his [God's] glory, and the very image of his [God's] substance" (Heb. 1:3). But these passages are only a part of the abundant proof that might be cited. Beyond them we cannot here and now go.

The essential deity and distinct personality of the Spirit is not stated in the Scriptures with such definiteness and precision as is that of the Son, but is involved or implied in passages too many at present to enumerate. The formula for baptism, given by our Lord himself, "baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19), clearly teaches the Spirit's distinct personality and power; and this has always been the belief of the church.

The Scriptures, however, do not formulate what is called the doctrine of the Trinity, but give only the essential data which the church has combined and stated in the Nicean Creed.

We have thus, in this comparatively brief and imperfect way, tried to trace the essential contents and gradual development of the Biblical idea of God. It is not an idea which, as some affirm, is merely an *ideal*, existing only in the human mind, the result of a slowly unfolding process of thought brooding upon the nature of things and upon man's own nature and experience amid the changes and forces and laws of this visible and tangible world, an idea, or ideal, to which there corresponds no objective being. If it were merely that it would still be the most marvellous work which the unaided reason of man has ever accomplished. Nothing which his philosophy, dreaming of things unseen, has produced; nothing which his religions, aspiring after a god unknown, have conceived, can compare with it. You have only to read the history of human thought without the Bible to assure yourselves of that. And if it be true that man is unable to pass beyond the limits of his own conceptions, then his philosophy, with its necessary and universal convictions concerning the nature and forms of metaphysical being, is but illusion, and his religions, based upon an inescapable belief in the existence of a person or persons beyond and above him, visible only to the inward eye, are but misleading mockeries. In vain has he built his altars; in vain has he poured upon them the blood of countless victims; in

vain has he offered prayers pleading for help, which, sounding out through an echoless abyss, have no answer; in vain has he clung to a faith that *God is*, and to a hope that some time and somehow the answer will be given, and that God will reveal himself not only as the judge condemning sin but as the Father, loving, merciful, forgiving, and restoring man to an abiding fellowship with himself. The very nature and contents of the Biblical idea impress upon us the truth of its objective reality. Man is not mocked by hunger, for there is food; nor by thirst, for there is drink; nor by the yearning after truth, for he finds it in the inner and the outer worlds. So the deep, instinctive hunger and thirst of the soul for the living God, the inborn and deathless desire to know him, and the abiding conviction that he is, all imply the reality of God. If not, then the reason and heart of man are sources of error only, and the age-long cry for a truth which neither nature nor man can give shall issue in an endless despair.

As we look back now over the slow religious development which the Bible records, which began with certain essential conceptions, limited in expression, but which grew throughout the centuries of revelation until they attained the fulness and power of the teaching of our Lord and his apostles, we find in this development an argument for the truth of the Bible's claim concerning itself; that its historical accounts are a truthful statement of how and when and through whom the Biblical thought of God has been revealed. But we live in an

age of doubt and of denial. It is not an age of creative thought but of critical investigation. More than ever before the sacred Scriptures are subjected to microscopic criticism. Not the great outstanding features but the manifold minutiæ are treated with a detail almost exhaustive, and the main facts and truths are oftentimes obscured and lost to view. Hence this criticism has been called, and rightly called, destructive. I do not deny that critical study is important and even necessary. There is a criticism that is conservative and constructive. But much of the Biblical criticism of to-day rests on unproved assumptions, and these assumptions include often a frank denial of the possibility of a supernatural revelation.

Moreover, there is slight regard for the past, as if its records were mainly traditional and nearly always wrong. Such criticism finds the Biblical account of creation, of the temptation and fall, of the flood and destruction of life, to be merely mythological, or fanciful creations of the mind. To it the patriarchs are eponymous, or, at the most, legendary characters. The exodus from Egypt, with its attendant plagues, never occurred; or, if it did, it was in a way different from that given in the record. The Mosaic legislation, except to a very limited extent, was not the work of the great lawgiver but the product of centuries of gradual evolution, and was not completed until the return from the captivity. It is true that the Bible presents this legislation as so closely and vitally interwoven with historic persons and events that they cannot be torn

asunder without mutilation of both. But this does not disturb the critical mind intent only on the theoretical reconstruction of the past. This reconstruction is based on a law of evolution, whose dates and working are at best but a matter of conjecture. That there is such a law we do not deny. It is to this, as disclosed in the history and thought of the Hebrew people, that we appeal. But our conclusions will depend upon the period within which we trace its working and the dates we assign to its principal epochs. An important assumption of the radical or destructive criticism is, as we have stated in a former lecture, that ethical monotheism began with the prophets of the eighth century B. C. Against this assumption the prophets themselves are witnesses. They are conscious of no new teaching. They are reformers, not innovators. Their God is the God of the fathers, the God of the promise, the God of creation and redemption. And this redemption is essentially moral. It is first dimly intimated after the temptation and fall. The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head. It is bodied forth in the history of the flood and the rescue of Noah's family. It has further and clearer disclosure in the call of Abraham, in the legislation of Moses, in the rescue work of the judges; and when the prophets throughout the period of the kings uttered their burning messages of retribution and of hope, this distinctively moral and redemptive idea of God was widened and deepened, and became more individual in its application to the hearts and lives of men. In the New Testament times

all that was prophetic before reached historic fulfilment in the person and work of Jesus Christ, beyond which lies only the world's acceptance of him as Saviour and Lord. The one fundamental and unfolding element which underlies and determines this entire historic process is, I repeat, the divinely given promise of redemption. It is the golden key of the sacred Scriptures. It is the sole adequate explanation of all the persons and events which they record. Without it there is no law, no order, no beginning, no end. Confusion unrelieved rests on past and present and future alike.

The question now arises, How can we account for the continuity throughout successive ages of this unfolding idea of a moral and redemptive God if the books which contain it are made up of shreds and patches? For such they are if much of modern criticism is accepted. The polychrome, or many-colored edition of some of the Biblical books, notably that of Judges, in clear and definite detail shows this. Each assumed source has a distinctive color, and each assumed editor, or redactor, is in like manner indicated. This extends even to single connective words. But among so many different revisers, belonging to widely different periods, how is it that there has resulted such unity of thought and continuity of development? There must have been one presiding mind determining it all, and that mind, as the author of Hebrews tells us, must have been the mind of God. This is required to explain the essential harmony of the many books which really make up the

Bible. Much more is it required if these books are themselves compilations of unknown authors, a bewildering combination of bits and portions, chosen here and there, to compose, as I have said, a patchwork of myth and legend, and occasionally, it may be, an account to be regarded as historical.

There are books which are evidently compilations. Such is the book of Proverbs. But critical analysis and division has been carried to an extreme, the result of which is not infrequently a reckless disregard of the saving quality, common sense, and the destruction of faith in the Bible as the revelation of the will of God. The only rational position, it seems to me, is to accept it on its face value for what it claims to be. The only rational explanation of its manifold phenomena is that which is given by itself, that God speaks in and through its words, its persons, its events, and that it contains in clear and full expression the true conception of his nature, his character, and his eternal purpose concerning man. It is this thought of God that is the very core of the gospel, and in it lies the power by which the gospel has won its victories in the past. And if the Christian church is to withstand the persistent assaults of a critical scepticism and a philosophic unbelief, if it is to continue to minister to the deepest moral needs of man, to solve the perplexities of his inquiring mind, and satisfy the insistent yearning of his heart, if it is to continue inwardly to grow and outwardly to extend its conquests throughout the world, to overcome error and vice and wretchedness and woe, if it is to perfect

in the individual the noblest forms of moral and spiritual character, and among nations to destroy war and bring the peace which Isaiah prophesied and of which the herald angels sang; if, in a word, it is to accomplish, whether soon or late, the great mission God has given it, then, by its teaching in the school, its preaching in the pulpit, and its life in society and the home, it must continue to proclaim what God is, his Fatherhood, his righteousness, his grace, his love, and these as declared in the life that culminated in the sacrifice and resurrection of his Son, Jesus Christ, for there is nothing else that the world so much needs to know as this Biblical idea of God.

THE BROSS LECTURES

THE BROSS LECTURES are an outgrowth of a fund established in 1879 by the late William Bross, lieutenant-governor of Illinois from 1866 to 1870. Desiring some memorial of his son, Nathaniel Bross, who died in 1856, Mr. Bross entered into an agreement with the "Trustees of Lake Forest University," whereby there was finally transferred to them the sum of forty thousand dollars, the income of which was to accumulate in perpetuity for successive periods of ten years, the accumulations of one decade to be spent in the following decade, for the purpose of stimulating the best books or treatises "on the connection, relation, and mutual bearing of any practical science, the history of our race, or the facts in any department of knowledge, with and upon the Christian Religion." The object of the donor was to "call out the best efforts of the highest talent and the ripest scholarship of the world to illustrate from science, or from any department of knowledge, and to demonstrate the divine origin and the authority of the Christian Scriptures; and further, to show how both science and revelation coincide and prove the existence, the providence, or any or all of the attributes of the only living and true God, 'infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.'"

The gift contemplated in the original agreement of 1879 was finally consummated in 1890. The first decade of the accumulation of interest having closed in 1900, the trustees of the Bross Fund began at this time to carry out the provisions of the deed of gift. It was determined to give the general title of "The Bross Library" to the series of the books purchased and published with the proceeds of the Bross Fund. In accordance with the express wish of the donor, that the "Evidences of Christianity" of his "very dear friend and teacher, Mark Hopkins, D.D.," be purchased and "ever numbered and known as No. 1 of the series," the trustees secured the copyright of this work, which has been republished in a presentation edition as Volume I of the Bross Library.

The trust agreement prescribed two methods by which the production of books and treatises of the nature contemplated by the donor was to be stimulated:

1. The trustees were empowered to offer one or more prizes during each decade, the competition for which was to be thrown open to "the scientific men, the Christian philosophers and historians of all nations." In accordance with this provision, a prize of $6,000 was offered in 1902 for the best book fulfilling the conditions of the deed of the gift, the competing manuscripts to be presented on or before June 1, 1905. The prize was awarded to the Reverend James Orr, D.D., professor of apologetics and systematic theology in the

United Free Church College, Glasgow, for his treatise on "The Problem of the Old Testament," which was published in 1906 as Volume III of the Bross Library. The second decennial prize of $6,000 was awarded in 1915 to the Reverend Thomas James Thorburn, D.D., LL.D., Hastings, England, for his book entitled, "The Mythical Interpretation of the Gospels," which has been published as Volume VII of the Bross Library. The announcement of the conditions may be obtained from the president of Lake Forest College.

2. The trustees were also empowered to "select and designate any particular scientific man or Christian philosopher and the subject on which he shall write," and to "agree with him as to the sum he shall receive for the book or treatise to be written." Under this provision the trustees have, from time to time, invited eminent scholars to deliver courses of lectures before Lake Forest College, such courses to be subsequently published as volumes in the Bross Library. The first course of lectures, on "Obligatory Morality," was delivered in May, 1903, by the Reverend Francis Landey Patton, D.D., LL.D., President of Princeton Theological Seminary. The second course of lectures, on "The Bible: Its Origin and Nature," was delivered in May, 1904, by the Reverend Marcus Dods, D.D., Professor of Exegetical Theology in New College, Edinburgh. These lectures were published in 1905 as Volume II of the Bross Library. The third course of lectures, on "The Bible of Nature," was delivered in September and October, 1907, by Mr. J. Arthur Thomson, M.A.,

Regius Professor of Natural History in the University of Aberdeen. These lectures were published in 1908 as Volume IV of the Bross Library. The fourth course of lectures, on "The Religions of Modern Syria and Palestine," was delivered in November and December, 1908, by Frederick Jones Bliss, Ph.D., of Beirut, Syria. These lectures are published as Volume V of the Bross Library. The fifth course of lectures, on "The Sources of Religious Insight," was delivered November 13 to 19, 1911, by Professor Josiah Royce, Ph.D., of Harvard University. These lectures are embodied in the sixth volume. Volume VII, "The Mythical Interpretation of the Gospels," by the Reverend Thomas James Thorburn, D.D., was published in 1915. The seventh course of lectures, on "The Will to Freedom," was delivered in May, 1915, by the Reverend John Neville Figgis, D.D., LL.D., of the House of the Resurrection, Mirfield, England, and published as Volume VIII of the series. In 1916 Professor Henry Wilkes Wright, of Lake Forest College, delivered the next course of lectures on "Faith Justified by Progress." These lectures are embodied in Volume IX. In 1921, the Reverend John P. Peters, Ph.D., of Sewanee, Tennessee, delivered a course of lectures on "Spade and Bible." These lectures are embodied in Volume X. In November, 1921, the lectures on "Christianity and Problems of Today," which constitute Volume XI of the Bross Lectures, were delivered upon the occasion of the inauguration of the President. The present volume is Volume XII,

entitled, "The Biblical Idea of God," by M. Bross Thomas, D.D., Professor Emeritus of Biblical Literature of Lake Forest College.

HERBERT MCCOMB MOORE,
President of Lake Forest University.

Lake Forest, Illinois.

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